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COMMODORE USER

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◀ Tony Cottee bubbles over

SEPTEMBER

SPECIALS



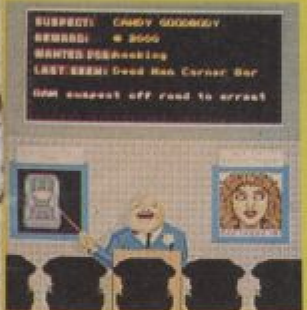


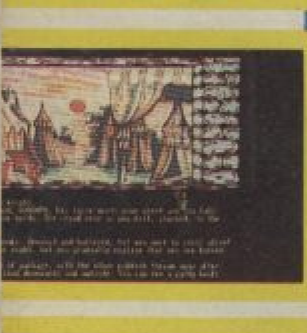






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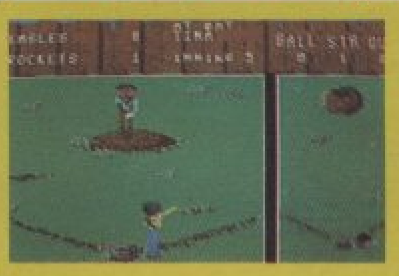




ED'S BIT

Put the flags out, uncork the bubbly, happy days are here again — with a rush of great new Commodore software. After a shakey start to the year with no really brilliant games coming out, suddenly everything has changed — with no less than five Screen Stars in this issue. We nearly had a Super Star on our hands in the shape of California Games — the epic Epyx title just missing our premiere accolade.
With the big Christmas launches yet to come it could be a vintage year for Commodore games.

SCREEN SCENE





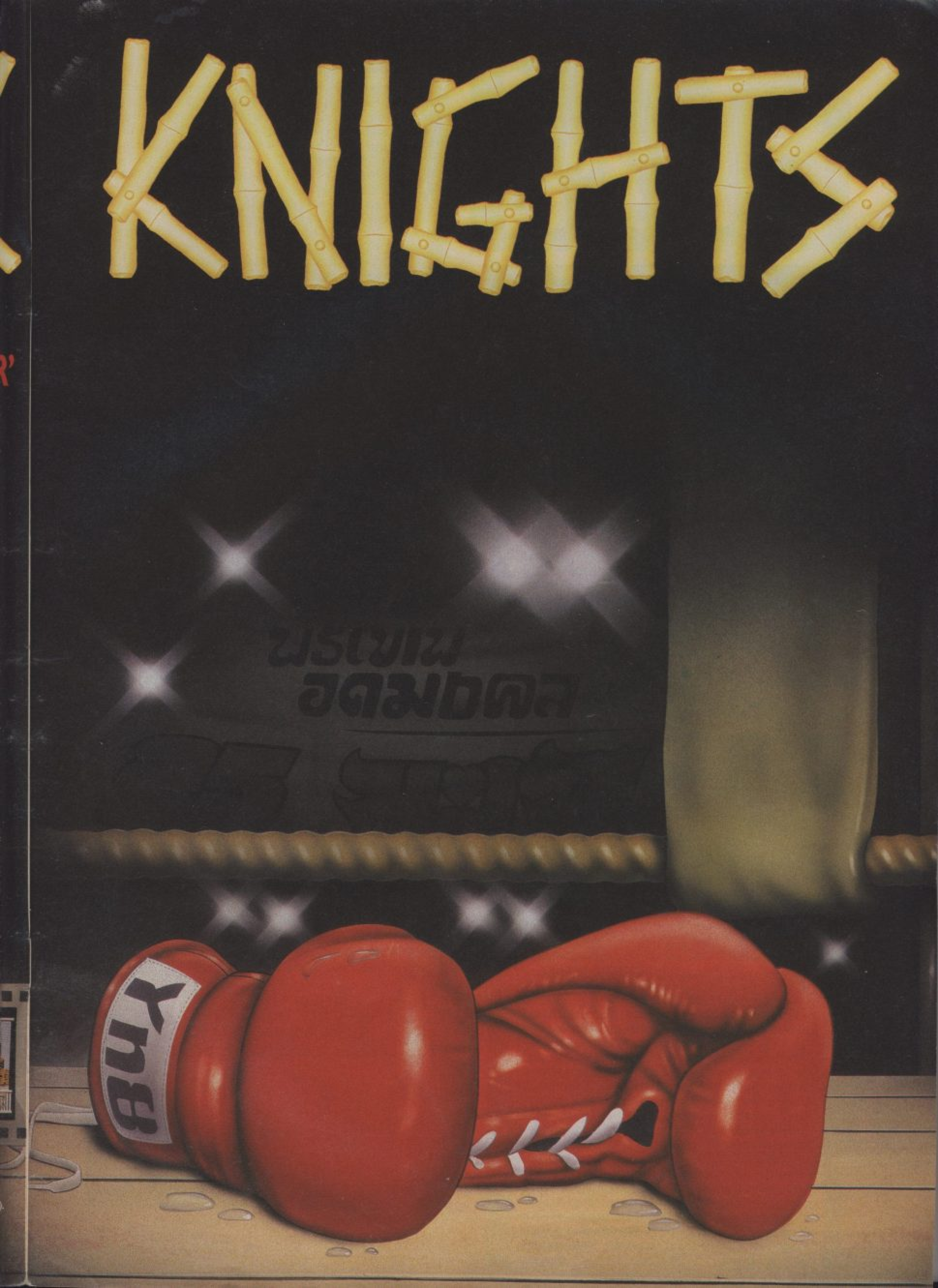


▼ The Living Daylights



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KNIGHTS

BUZZ



AMIGA LEVIATHAN

We hear from those nice folk at English Software that we'll soon be seeing their Amiga version of that Zaxxonic shoot 'em up, *Leviathan*. With its left and right diagonally scrolling planetscapes, its stirring digitised music and sound effects and its striking graphic landscapes now captured on 512K's-worth, it certainly looks like this high-quality space-age blast-or-be-blasted will be one for Amiga-owners to look out for. Doubting Thomases can see Amiga *Leviathan* previewed on video on the US Gold stand at the PCW Show.

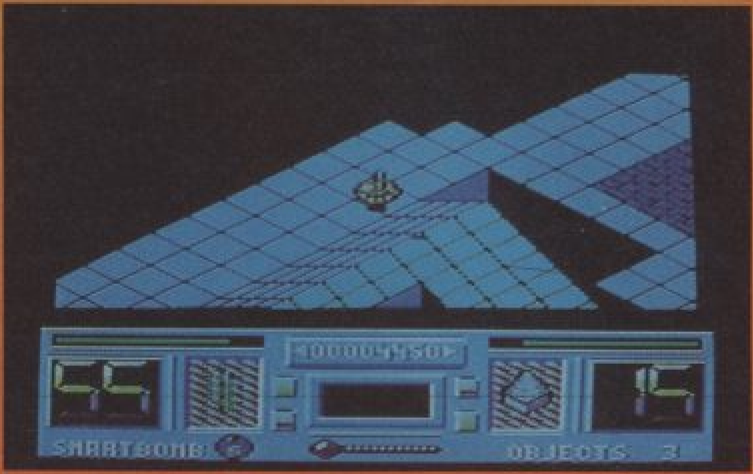


THUNDERCATS

Thundercats, as no doubt you all know, already feature on TV, in a Marvel comic, and on the shelves of your local toy store, so it didn't take a genius to work out that sooner or later some bright young software house would put them onto the 64. That bright young software house is Elite. The story is that the source from which the Thundercats derive their power, the Eye of Thundera, has gone missing from its usual home in Sword of Omens. And, as if that wasn't enough, the Thundercats themselves have all gone AWOL too. All, that is except you, their leader Lion-o. This shooting-swordfighting-'n'-searching game has been described to us as "a cross between *Impossible Mission*, *Tir-Na-Nog* and *Ghosts and Goblins*". Thundercats Ho! So there.

RED L.E.D.

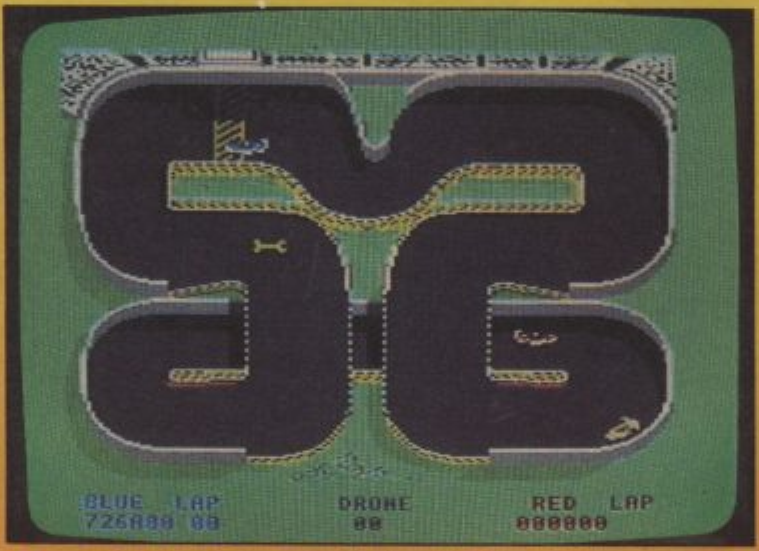
In *Red L.E.D.*, from Ariolasoft, your mission is to cross a grid by filling in a path, in the style of the T.V. quiz show, *Blockbusters*. But instead of having to answer questions to fill in your squares, you've got to fight for 'em. "You", in *Red L.E.D.* are any one of three cuddly Battle Droids. Each square represents a disembodied landscape floating in outer space, and you've got to collect all the energy pods on each landscape and find the exit in order to "fill in" the square, using whichever of your three droid personas has the most useful characteristics for that landscape's terrain. You've also got plenty of nasties trying to prevent you from doing your task, and there's always the chance you'll absent-mindedly fall off the edge of a landscape into the bottomless abyss. You've got just 60 minutes to battle your way across the screen, and every time you're hit, your time is cut. Good luck Jim, as they say.



HOW TO BE A COMPLETE BASTARD

Yes, it's another wacky game from that utter utter *utter* software house, Virgin. *How To Be A Complete Bastard* is, of course, based upon the book of the same name, written by one Adrian Edmondson, better known to the great unwashed as Vyvian, the destructive psycho-punk with studs in his forehead and appalling table manners in *The Young Ones*. *HTBACB* finds Ade gatecrashing a yuppie party and immediately setting about making life really nasty for as many of the designer guests as he can. The object is to incapacitate every single guest to score millions of Bastard points and to light up every letter in the phrase COMPLETE BASTARD by carrying out as many socially unacceptable activities as he can conjure up in his miniscule brain.



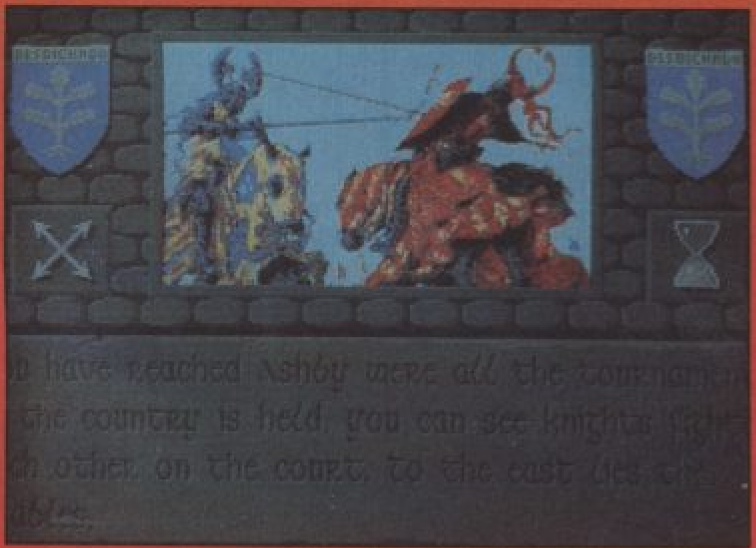


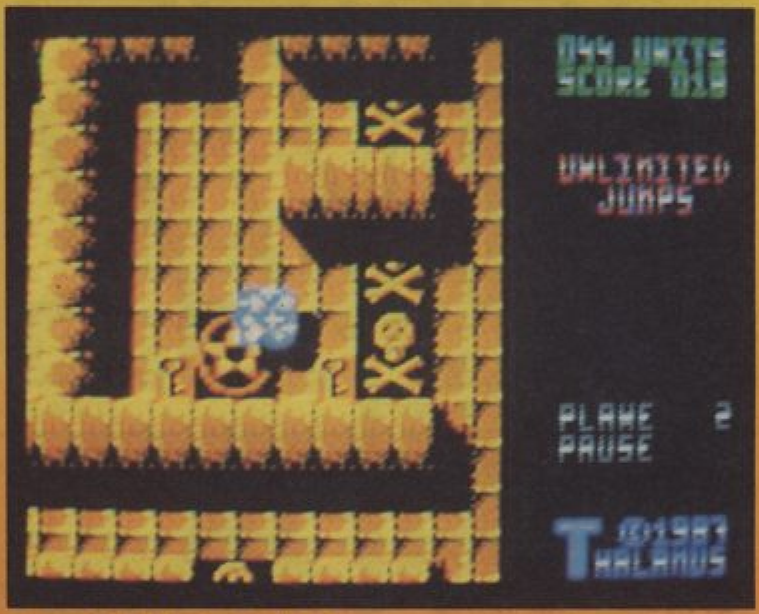
SUPER SPRINT

Cashing in on Mansell madness, Activision have just announced that they'll be releasing the 64 conversion of the arcade hit, *Super Sprint* towards the end of this month. With one or two player options, you can either race against a mate or against the computer on eight different courses. There are opening and closing gates to be negotiated, ramps to be jumped, oil spills to be avoided and golden wrenches to be acquired as you speed around the track (these may be traded in for enhancements to your silver dream machine). You'll even face the occasional tornado on your road to fame, fortune, laurel wreaths and a nice big bottle of bubbly. Now, what could be nicer?

IVANHOE

Listen 'ere, you ignorant lot: it's about time you got in a bit of culture, see? So we've decided to draw your attention to *Ivanhoe*. No, no, you fools, not the book (we presume that even you will have at some point cast your beady peepers over a copy of Sir Walter Scott's great medieval romance). No, what we're referring to is *Ivanhoe* — the Computer Novel (that's posh talk for "adventure game", we fink), the latest release in a series from Action software. You'll wander from tourneys (that's hip mediaeval speak for a joust) to the crusades, stopping off at places like the mighty castle of Torquilstone (home of Front-de-boeuf, you clots, the bloke who kidnapped Rebecca, daughter of one of Ivanhoe's closest mates). You'll maybe even drop into Sherwood Forest, where, who knows, you might encounter a Merry Man or two. Now if *this* doesn't broaden your minds . . .





QUEDEX

This latest offering from ace shoot 'em up programmer Stavros Fasoulas is notable for a couple of reasons. For one thing, it's not a shoot 'em up, but a multi-puzzle maze-style game: you've got nine levels, with different kinds of mazes to negotiate and different challenges and, just for a change, you the player can choose which section you wish to play rather than being slavishly tied to the order of play. And for another, *Quedex* will be young Mr Fasoulas' last game, at least for a long time. Being a Finn, you see, ol' Stav is obliged to do a period of service in the armed forces, and his number's just come up, so it's drop the flow-chart and catch the next plane home for him. Apparently, he's not sure whether he'll go back into games programming when he's finished his national service, so this could be your last chance . . .



EVENING STAR

Steaming in the wake of their critically-acclaimed *Southern Belle*, Hewson's second, and latest, steam train simulation *Evening Star* will bring C64-owning train-spotters along the route of the old Somerset and Dorset Line. Your mission? Simply to bring your train, pulled by the last of the British-Rail built steam locomotives, from Bath to Bournemouth. A doddle to all you *CU* hotshots, used to destroying entire races of aliens before breakfast, right? Wrong: driving a steam engine is no joke, especially when you're talking about the hilly track over the Mendips that you've got to negotiate. There are five skill levels in this simulation, and literally hundreds of things to mess up. A must for all would-be Ivor-the-engine-drivers.

BUZZ

BUZZ

OLYMPIA GAMES

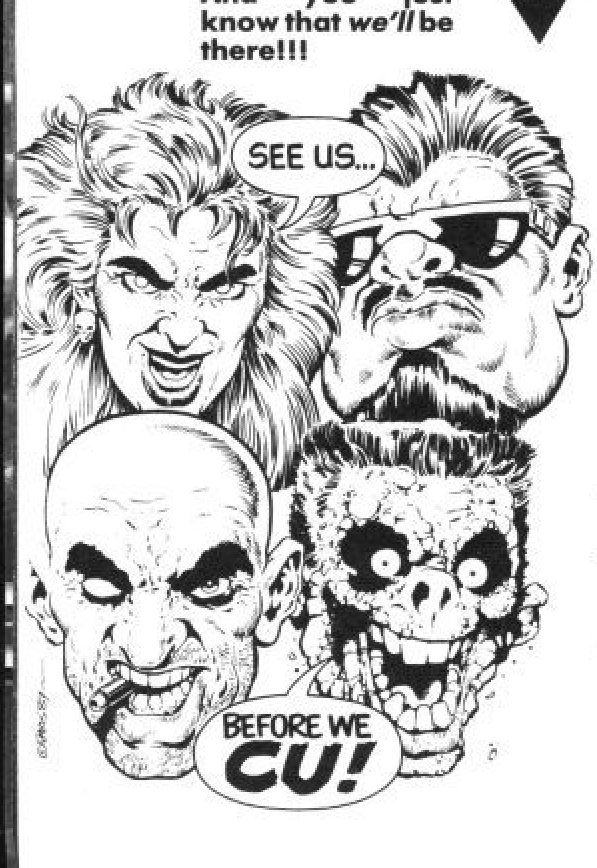
Yes, yes, it's that time of year again, when everybody who's anybody, and many who are nobody, converge upon Olympia, London, for the Personal Computer World Show.

Between Wednesday September 23rd and Sunday September 27th is when it's all happening: the first two days are for the trade only, but from Friday 25th onwards, it's open to all.

All the big names in software will be there, vying with one another for your attention and sponduliks with better stands and more games on show than ever before.

Commodore will be occupying an entire "village" within the hall, in the ground floor Addison Suite. Among many other exhibits of interest, you'll able to enjoy a special exhibition of the history of Commodore Machines. Another innovation on show which is bound to attract a lot of attention will be touch-sensitive screens, which dispense with the need for a keyboard in the playing of many games.

And you just know that *we'll* be there!!!



Among the games that **Gremlin** will be featuring on their two-storey stand will be their Walt Disney licence, *Basil The Great Mouse Detective*, and we're told that Basil and his arch-rival Rattigan will be there in the fur! Other interesting-looking exhibits will be *Alternative Games*, *Masters of the Universe* (not to be confused with US Gold's one) and *Compendium*, and apparently Gremlin's very own mascot, a walking, talking, living and very ugly green gremlin will be present also.

Meanwhile, over at the **Mastertronic** stand, the major attraction will be the appearance of the US National Video Game Team, who will be taking on a British team — which includes our very own Daniel Gilbert and Ferdy Hamilton — on as-yet-unreleased arcade games developed by Mastertronic's recently-established coin-op branch, *Arcadia*.

Firebird's stand will feature both the original arcade versions and the conversions of their two recently-acquired licences, *Bubble Bobble* and *Flying Shark*, and there'll also be a lot of people milling around for a rumoured showing of *Star Trek*.

Ocean will have an array of arcade machines on show, representing their recently-acquired licences for *Renegade*, *Rastan Saga*, *Combat School*, *Gryzor* and *Athena*, and hope to be showing the conversions too. They're also intending to be previewing the eagerly-awaited film licence, *Platoon*.

Activision's major products will include *Predator* (based on the Arnold Schwarzenger movie) and their conversion of the wacky coin-op, *Rampage*. Also viewable on their stand will be **System 3**'s follow-up to *The Last Ninja*, *Bangkok Knights*, which is a Thai boxing sim. And Activision's sister label **Electric Dreams** will no doubt be pulling the crowds over too with previews of arcade licences like *Super Sprint*, *Super Hang-On* and *Firetrap*.

Basil — he'll be there!



Roy — will he be there?



Microprose's stand will feature the talents and wit of their boss, "Wild" Bill Stealey, and they'll be demonstrating their sims on an amazing hydraulically-controlled flight simulator.

US Gold will be there too, and no doubt will be pulling the crowds with their **Epyx** products. The publicity department were being a wee bit coy when we asked, but we understand that there's a strong likelihood that *Out Run* and *720°* coin-ops will be on display.

Piranha will be showing off *Roy of the Rovers*, *Yogi* and *Through the Trapdoor*, and hint that Roy, Yogi and the redoubtable Berk may be there in person (bear? thing?).

And **Domark** will be publicising their "Not a Penny More, Not a Penny Less" with a personal visit by "Poor" Jeffrey Archer himself.

Among the hundreds of other companies in attendance will be Elite, Konami, Hewson, Electronic Arts, ANCO, Digital Integration, Mirrorsoft, Palace, Incentive Software and Durrell.

And, of course, no visit to PCW would be complete without experiencing the cosmic brilliance of the fantabulous **Commodore User** stand, featuring free coin-ops, live music, hundreds of surprise guests and even, if you're *really* lucky, a rap with the *CU* Crew themselves.

Be there, as they say, or be eternally regretful.

Prepare for Combat

Aaaaah so. Continuing their recent policy up grabbing top coin licenses within minutes of their appearance in the Arcades, Ocean have signed up copyrights to two more arcade smashes.

Gryzor and the much fancied *Combat School*. *Gryzor* is a traditional arcade hack, maim and slaughter game with wicked graphics and an amazing funky soundtrack which is only spoiled by the rather loud sound FX which deafen the games player. The rough plot to *Gryzor* is grab a decent weapon with your hyper-fit arm which can almost break the sound barrier as it swings through 360°. Pumping the laser equivalent of one of Nick Kelly's shirts, you have to blast your way through several technoramatic landscapes, the only thing driving you onwards being the thought of a ginormously large 90% death-proof computer at the end of it all. Good fun, eh? The second title is *Combat School* (as recently played by Euge Lacey and Marillion's Mark Kelly) the green beret verson of *Decathlon*, with you guiding your super tough marine through various assault courses and other trials, in the pursuit of excellence.

These titles will be released in time for Christmas, but, as most experienced gamesters already know, never trust a release date. Those who can't wait will have a chance to try the original coin-ops out on Ocean's PCW Show stand.



With the advent of the Amiga's extraordinary sound reproduction capabilities, the hackers have been having a field day. Word had already reached us of superfab mixes of toons by such worthies (?) as Dire Straits ("Money for Nothing") and Queen ("Its A Kind of Magic") cropping up on Amiga demo discs, with some suitably tasty screens thrown in. But what really made us realise that a new wave of ultra-trendy hip-hackers were beavering away out there was when a grubby but perfectly formed demo of Run-DMC's pervlicious Aerosmith outtake "Walk This Way" fell into our hands. We loaded it up and — *PHEW!!!* — we were treated to an incredible digitised re-mix of said hip-hop anthem stripped-down, sharpened up and utterly irresistable. No more excuses, you softie software houses, we know it can be done. So which of you is going to be first with a truly crucial Amiga rap-soundtrack???

Amiga offer

This is dedicated to all you out there who've ever dreamed of owning an Amiga, and the monitor to go with it.

Commodore have announced the next step in the war against Jack Tramiel's Atari 520 and 1040 Sts. They're slashing an amazing hundred quid off the Amiga, plus a similar reduction off the A1081 colour monitor giving you the total package at two hundred sobs less than the official asking price — an attractive offer don't you agree?

If you're a registered Commodore owner you should be receiving two vouchers for a hundred quid, one for the machine, the other for the monitor, through the post shortly. But you'll have to get the dosh together pretty quickly — the offer closes September 12th.



Domarcher

"As the train gathered speed he tried his opening gambit, which was quite good by his normal standards: 'What a super picture on the front of* Vogue *taken by my old friend Patrick Lichfield.' "

What an ace way to get the attention of a demure stranger with whom you happen to be sharing a train carriage! And what a tremendously scintillating prose style! And what the heck is this stuff doing in *Buzz*?

Well, it just so happens that we found a hefty package on our desk the very morning that Rich-Man-Poor-Man-Rich-Man Jeffrey Archer was anxiously awaiting the verdict of the jury in his scandal-filled libel action against the Daily Star.

"In the News Today", began the covering letter brightly, "JEFFREY ARCHER. By now you should have heard the verdict!" Phew! we said, this is stirring stuff first thing in the morning from those publicity-conscious Domark folk, but why are they telling *us* all this? The awful truth slowly dawned: they're bringing out a Jeffrey Archer game! And that heavy package that comes with the press release isn't an enormous chocolate bribe, it's one of His Notoriousness' books!

Yes, Domark and Poor Jeffrey have got together to bring you, the great game-playing public, a "graphic adventure" based on our Jeff's first ever novel, "Not A Penny More, Not a Penny Less", and to promote it they've been dispensing copies of this best-selling paperback to all and sundry, including even us.

Apparently, you will find yourself "living the role of Stephen Bradley the Oxford Maths don who has lost a small fortune by investing in a fraudulent oil company" as the said Stephen sets out to get his own back on the multi-millionaire crook who swindled him.

Older readers may recall that "Not A Penny More, Not a Penny Less" (the book) was written when the former chairman of the Conservative Party was a bankrupt business man, and was largely inspired not by artistic considerations so much as Mr Archer's desire to raise a large amount of dosh in a hurry. Of course, you should not take seriously the cruel suggestions of that hardened cynic, Mike "Rabid Pinko" Pattenden that "NAPM, NAPL" (the game) might owe its existence to any such base or capitalistic motives. We're sure it will be an absolutely wunnerfool game, and can hardly wait for its release this Autumn. (yeurrghh!)

Musical Software: **HMV, one of the first stores to challenge the superiority of the Virgin Mega-Stores in Oxford Street, are now dishing out a real kick in the goolies for Branson and Co by opening a new software department on the first floor of their Hi-Tech Oxford Street branch. Among other things they will be catering for extreme tastes, stretching even to those who own IBM PC compatibles.**

Tweet, tweet. **Firebird are preparing an all out assault on the budget market once more by introducing a host of new re-leases to add to their already large Silver range. These releases include; *Decathlon, Zenji, River Raid* and *Rainbow Dragon*. All are retailing for £1.99.**

Hieroglyphic horror: **In CRL's latest game, *Book of the Dead*, you play the part of a young Egyptian godling called Kteth. But your daddy murders Osiris the head honcho of the gods, and gets caught, charged, convicted, and subsequently thrown out of heaven. You, being his son, have to carry the burden of his guilt. So, you have to set about finding the 'Book of the Dead' so you can die and get back to heaven. Erm, sounds right. *Book of the Dead* will cost £8.95 on tape.**

Hacker hacked**: Those of you with a taste for the art of the possible (that's politics to you down the back row) will be thrilled to hear that Mosaic Publishing (the same crowd that brought you *The Secret Diary Of Adrian Mole*) have decided to bring out a game based on the antics of Jim Hacker, MP, and his faithful, if devious acolytes Sir Humphrey and Bernard, in the brilliant comedy TV show, *Yes, Prime Minister*. Can you, the hapless PM, steer the leaky ship of state through a turbulent week in Westminster? Find out in October.**

BUZZ

READERS COIN-OP CHART

1. **OUT RUN**
2. **INDIANA JONES AND THE TEMPLE OF DOOM**
3. **ROAD RUNNER**
4. **RENEGADE**
5. **DOUBLE DRAGON**

***Out Run** continues to live up to its name and whips the competition. But will **Double Dragon** beat its predecessor, **Renegade**? And what about fab newies like **R-Type** and **APB**? Write and tell us what your top five coin-ops and you could walk away with a T-shirt. Send those top fives to COIN-OP CHART, COMMODORE USER, PRIORY COURT, 30-32 FARRINGDON LANE, LONDON EC1R 3AU.*

ADVENTURE CHART

TM	LM		
1	NE	DEFENDER OF THE CROWN	MIRRORSOFT
2	1	KILLED UNTIL DEAD	US GOLD
3	NE	STAR WRECK	ALTERNATIVE
4	4	SHADOWS OF MORDOR	MELBOURNE HOUSE
5	NE	GUILD OF THIEVES	RAINBIRD
6	5	MASTERS OF THE UNIVERSE	US GOLD
7	3	FRANKENSTEIN	CRL
8	2	PORTAL	ACTIVISION
9	8	KOBYASHI	MASTERTRONIC
10	NE	ALTERNATIVE REALITY	DATASOFT/US GOLD

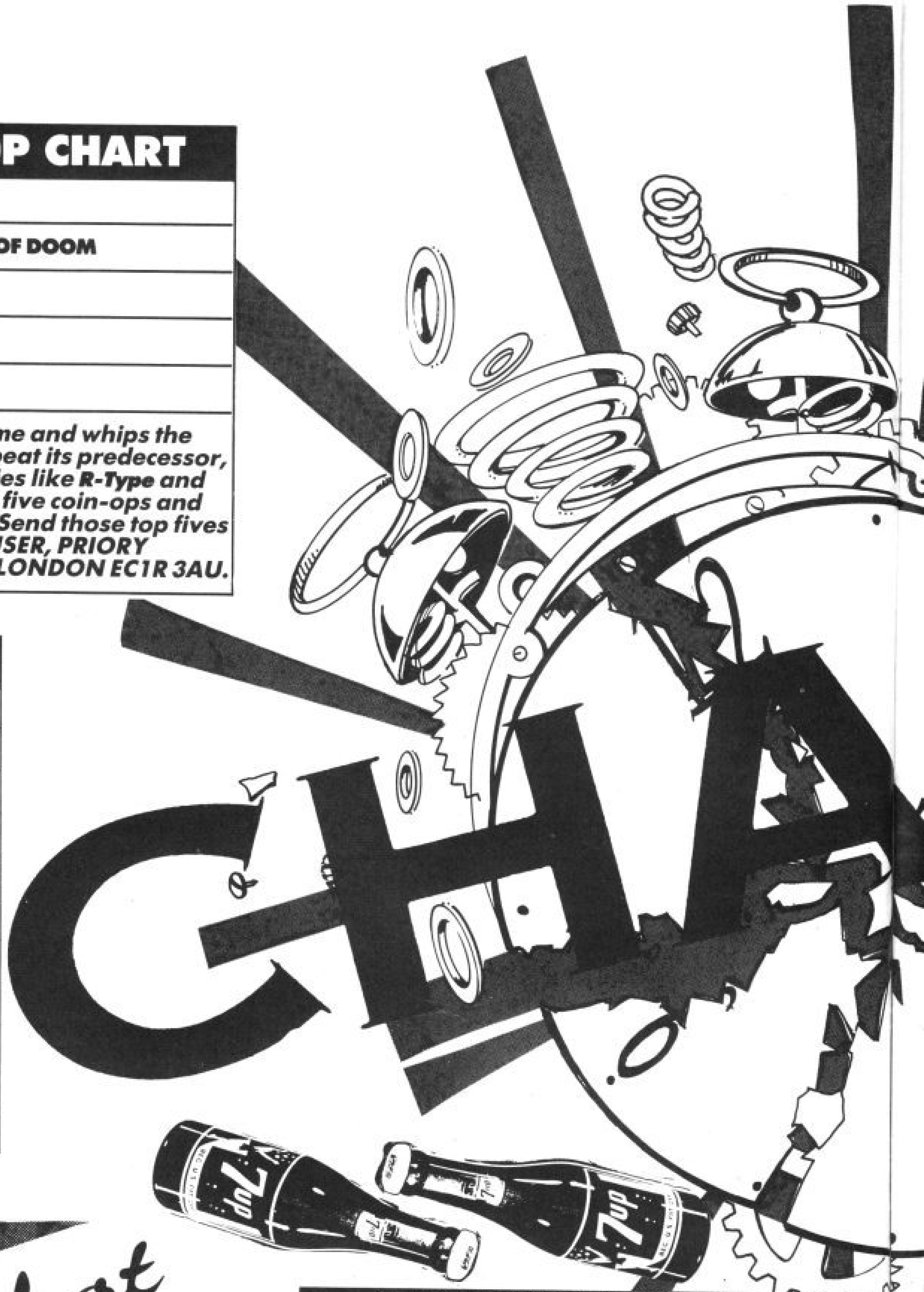


Chart Chat

No prizes for guessing that The Last Ninja is still firmly esconced on top of the C64 charts. It could stay there longer than Mull of Kintyre! Two new entries burst straight into the top three from US Gold. There's World Class Leaderboard peaking at number two despite being the fourth in the line (with Executive still at 17). Talking about thrashing a dead horse with a putter. Road Runner goes streaking in at number three despite the ACME loading system.

Cheapos keep up their end with Kik Start 2 and I Ball selling well and Park Patrol just staying in there after all these months. Another long server is the full priced Gunship. On the new side it's good to see Defender of the Crown selling well. Head over Heels is tumbling up the charts as well.

Sadly the C16 chart is looking static and stale as ever and probably will do until Christmas when word has it the companies will make their last effort before ditching the machine completely. Look out soon for the first Amiga chart in the magazine world!

TOP TEN WORST FIZZY DRINKS

Voted the most gut-wrenching, stomach dissolving, wind-inducing, teeth-rotting, brain numbing, uncool fizzing by the CU team.

1. **Dr. Peppers** (10 day old coke).
2. **Cream Soda** (any brand at all).
3. **Vimto** (anagram of vomit).
4. **Quattro** (bad enough without the awful green bottles).
5. **New recipe Coca-Cola** (no longer the *real* thing).
6. **Cherry Pepsi** (Coke matured over beechwood).
7. **Tizer** (Australians wouldn't give ZZZs for it).
8. **Lilt** (turns the roof of your mouth green).
9. **Cariba** (10 day old Lilt).
10. **Kaliber** (it *is* a joke).



C16 CHART

TM	LM		
1	1	PAPERBOY	ELITE
2	2	SABOTEUR	ALTERNATIVE
3	3	GUN LAW	MASTERTRONIC
4	4	FOUR GREAT GAMES	MICRO VALUE
5	NE	XADIUM	MASTERTRONIC
6	5	GWNN	MASTERTRONIC
7	NE	BATTLE	MASTERTRONIC
8	6	FOOTBALL MANAGER	ADDICTIVE
9	7	TERRA NOVA	ANCO
10	RE	KONAMI'S COIN-OP HITS	IMAGINE

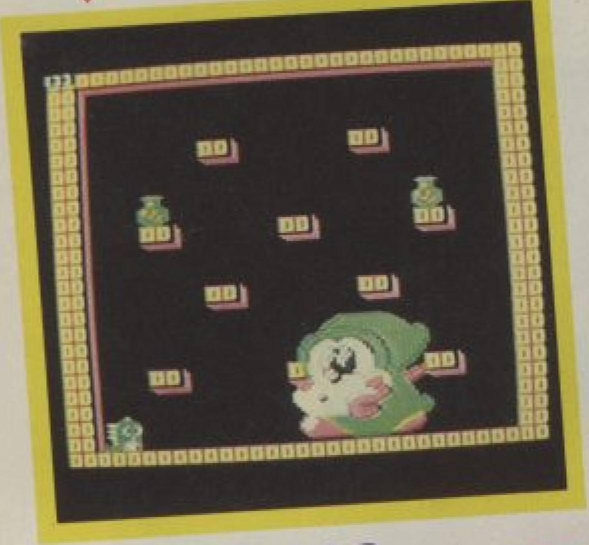
C64 CHART

TM	LM		
1	1	LAST NINJA	SYSTEM 3
2	NE	WORLD CLASS LEADERBOARD	ACCESS/US GOLD
3	NE	ROAD RUNNER	US GOLD
4	10	KIK START 2	MASTERTRONIC
5	5	I BALL	FIREBIRD
6	2	BARBARIAN	PALACE
7	3	MILK RACE	MASTERTRONIC
8	6	BMX SIMULATOR	CODE MASTERS
9	NE	RUN FOR GOLD	ALTERNATIVE
10	9	FOOTBALL MANAGER	ADDICTIVE
11	4	WIZBALL	OCEAN
12	NE	DEFENDER OF THE CROWN	MIRRORSOFT
13	NE	HEAD OVER HEELS	OCEAN
14	7	FOUR GREAT GAMES	MICRO VALUE
15	11	GUNSHIP	MICROPROSE
16	NE	U.F.O.	FIREBIRD
17	8	EXECUTIVE LEADERBOARD	ACCESS/US GOLD
18	20	LA SWAT	MASTERTRONIC
19	15	MICRO RHYTHM	FIREBIRD
20	16	PARK PATROL	FIREBIRD

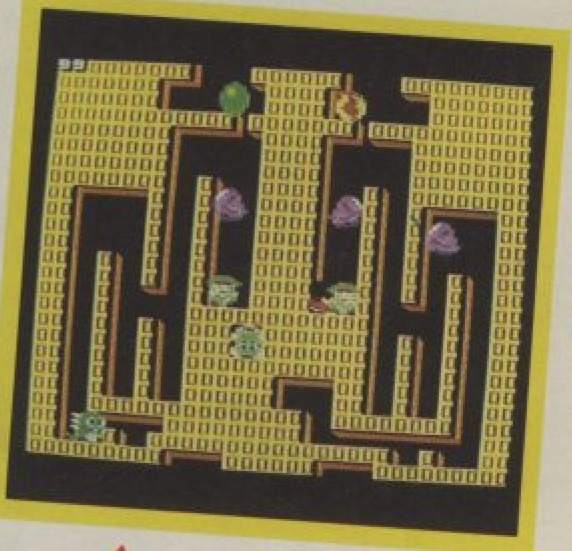
REVIEWERS CHOICE

What games have been thrilling us for the last four weeks? The CU reviewers name their hottest plays:
EUGENE LACEY: Road Runner, Mega Apocolypse, Bubble Bobble.
NICK KELLY: California Games, APB, Heavy Metal Meltdown (pinball).
MIKE PATTENDEN: California Games, Bubble Bobble, Monte Carlo (pinball).
FRANCIS JAGO: Karate Kid II, Winter Games, World Games.
FERDY HAMILTON: Star Paws, Bubble Bobble, California Games.
MARK PATTERSON: Barbarian (Psygnosis Amiga), Defender of the Crown, Gryzor.

The end of the guest!







Looks like a mine. 'Cept these minors don't strike.

C64/128
Firebird
Price: £

Bubble Bobble



C.U. Screen Star



Love conquers all.

Despite being stabbed in the back by the Irish element in the office whilst on holiday and having half of Firebird whinging about my *Revs* review I am pledged as an upright journalist to review *Bubble Bobble* fairly despite having my integrity questioned and my shoulder blades pierced. I'm that kind of guy.

What better way to restore my cool than the therapeutic enjoyment of playing a game that should be used to ween addicts off heroin. If only it wasn't so scalp mutatingly frustrating.

Bubble Bobble is what I'd call an old style arcade game. By that I mean that it doesn't rely on state-of-the-art anything. The graphics are unspectacular and so is the sound.



To boldly bubble where no dragons have bubbled before!

BB stakes its reputation on mouth watering playability.

You control a cutesome little brontasaurus who seems to have swallowed a box of Omo. He goes round blowing bubbles like a diehard, lifelong attender at Upton Park.

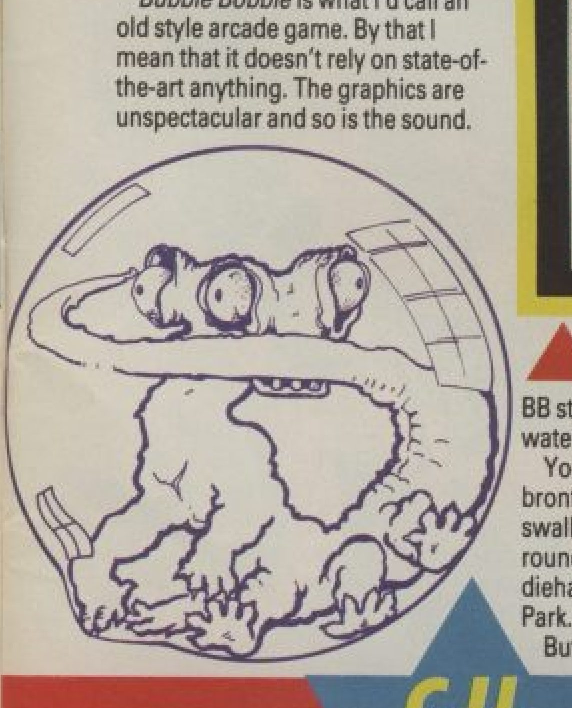
But its no easy life for Bronty just standing around hurling abuse on the terraces. You need to fill your ever emptying stomach and being something of a trendy filofax carrying dinosaur you are a vegetarian. Meat is just not on. A diet of fruit, cakes and ice creams is necessary. To do this you have to turn the rampaging ghosts' inedible hippopatami and disgusting looking purple fish which populate the platforms in the game into more acceptable fare. Bonuses pop up of all shapes and sizes. Umbrellas take you on several screens, running shoes speed up your movement, water droplets can be burst washing away nasties, crosses can be touched to flood the screen and bits of lightning can be burst killing everything like a smart bomb. Failure to dodge a meanie results in extinction.

It's very simple and immense fun to play. All that was needed was a software company not to cock it up in converting it. Firebird have succeeded in doing that with ease and turned in a game just as playable as its coin op mentor.

As with any two player game working with a friend is added fun, helping each other out and then stealing the bonuses.

Bubble Bobble has me foaming at the mouth, but it's not an adverse reaction, I'm just bursting with enthusiasm.

Mike Pattenden



C.U. Screen Star

Graphics	7
Sound	7
Toughness	9
Endurance	9
Value	9

8 Overall



A breakdown of the planets which attack you.



Blast the planets whilst they're small.

MEGA APOCA

Martech
64/128
Price: £9.95 /cass
Price: £14.95 /disk

A whizz of fast load makes my disk drive whirr as I sip my coffee and wonder if Mega Apocalypse is going to be as mega as the mutterings on the grapevine suggest.

I nearly fall off my seat when a title screen comes up for all the world like *Crazy Comets* and a most *Paperboy*-like voice shouts "get ready".

I'm ready and start to blast away at the aliens that buzz my spearhead ship quicker than Mike Pattenden can say "mine's a pint" where he spots a fellow reviewer at the bar in the City Pride.

The very obvious and immediate similarities to *Crazy Comets* (just out as a cheapo on the Ricochet label) soon fade as "Game Over" flashes on the screen seconds after I start — and before even reaching stage two.

When I say fast I mean like lightning. The nasties home in on your ship in clusters as a background of swirling stars gives you the impression you are about to be sucked into a vast lunar whirlpool.

There are going to be mixed opinions about *Mega* — principally because it appears like just an upgraded *Crazy Comets*. So much so that one CU reviewer who shall remain nameless commented: "I've heard of companies ripping off other companies' games before but I've never heard of them ripping off their own" when he first saw the game.

I decided to put this gripe to the test right away and loaded *Comets* on a computer beside *Mega*. Believe me the similarities don't just end with the title screen, but *Mega* is at least ten times quicker, looks better, sounds better and is much harder to play.

Graphics	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Sound	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Toughness	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Endurance	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Value	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

8 Overall





Some levels have a mega planet.

ALYPSE

The toughness is mainly due to the rotate function — a facility you will be initially loath to use because of its complexity but it is absolutely essential that you do if you are to master this blaster. Basically, picking up a 'Rotate Pod' enables you to turn your ship through 360° by pressing fire and pushing the joystick in the direction in which you want the ship to face. Sounds easy, I know, but once you start dodging the aliens and rotating at the same time it is anything but.

Spotting the Rotate Pod among the cluster of nasties also takes a bit of learning — as does identifying the Extra Life Ship and Special Missile Ship.

These facilities aside the rest is simple. Blast like mad and keep moving. The rest is down to speed of reactions — blasting and dodging at the same time, not separately. The only tip worth mentioning is to shoot the planets before they grow too large.

The Special Missiles are the key to blasting the big planets — or Mega Hothopians to give them their official titles. Once you pick up the missile it hovers in front of your ship — like the out-riding ships in Salamander. Wait for the right moment then lock it on to the planet and watch that missile eliminate that planet.

The game is crammed with play options. My favourite is the *Duel Enemy* option where you both take on the nasties. Sure, you team up to blast them but you are not that bothered if your 'partner' gets downed by the nasties either.

Duel Allies is where you genuinely team up to take on the *Mega Apocalypse* assortment of vicious planets.

You can also play solo which is just as much fun — and every bit as challenging.

The mutterings about *Mega Apocalypse* that I mentioned earlier were full of buzz words like "five channel sound" "digitised speech" and Rob Hubbard sound tracks.

Well I have to say that these aspects of the game are not what makes it for me.

There are 15 digitised phrases in the game — most of them not very clear at all. The exceptions are "get ready" and "you've been hit". All of these phrases and the sound effects have been "sampled", programmer Simon Nicol assures me. This is as may be but they are still fairly murky as far as I can hear.

The music is OK but hardly one of Hubbard's best — even though it is continuous as the game plays, and does not pause to allow the sound effects. You get both together.

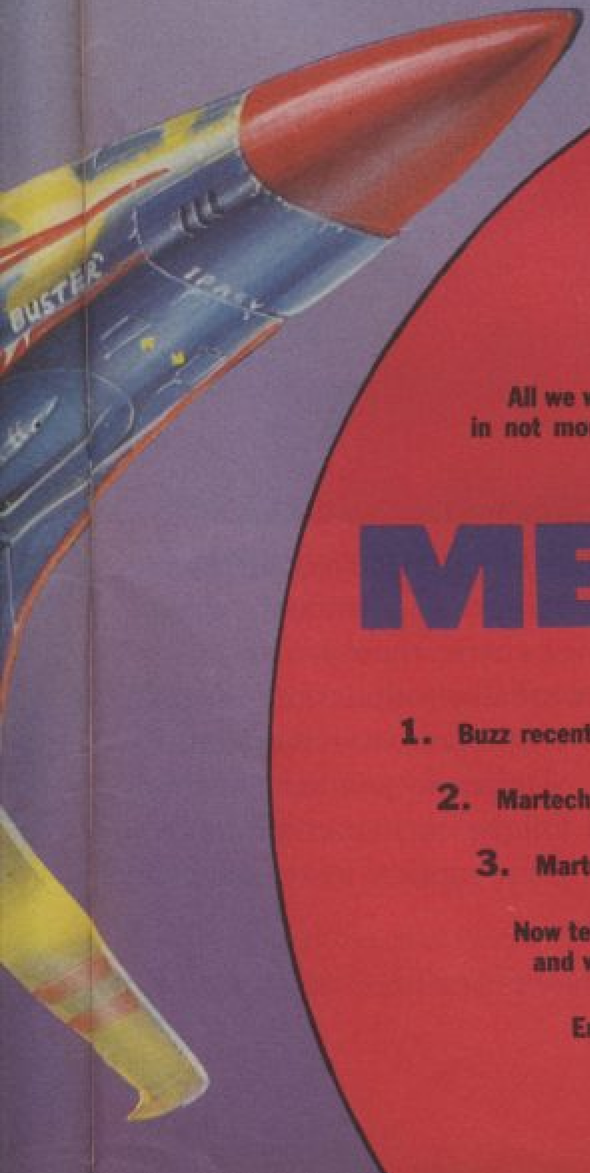
You can't criticise a game for not living up to its hype too much. If you did that, just about every game ever launched would receive a universal



Mega flop — start again.

slagging. Anyway, there is a lot more to *Mega Apocalypse* than mere frills. What you have here is a shoot 'em up for the professional marksman. It lacks the sophistication of game design of, say, a *Zynaps* or a *Delta* — but for sheer frenetic blasting it hits the spot.

Eugene Lacey



With a word like Mega in the title Martech and CU thought we ought to get together to mark the launch of this game with a suitably mega prize. We are giving away a megafabulous Amiga A500 — the machine anyone would rush out and buy if they got a triple divvy on the pools. With graphics and sound to blow you away this machine looks set to become the natural successor to the Commodore 64. Now is you chance to get your hands on an Amiga for nowt. All we want you to do is answer these simple questions about Martech games and then tell us in not more than fifty words what you think would make a good Martech game for the dream machine.

MEGA·COMPO

Questions

1. **Buzz recently carried a story about a forthcoming Martech game featuring a famous 2000AD comic strip hero. Who is he?**
2. **Martech's acclaimed judo game was called (a) Ouch Get Off My Foot (b) Tokyo Shuffle or (c) Uichi Mata.**
3. **Martech last year launched a game about a famous muscle bound hero who lived in the jungle. Who was he?**

Now tell us which famous person or hero you would like Martech to turn into an Amiga game and why. You may use a separate piece of paper if you wish. Try to keep your description brief. Say less than 100 words. Answers on a postcard please.

Entries should be sent to Megacompo, Commodore User, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London, EC1R 3AU.

Entries must reach us by September 26th. The Ed's decision is always final.

NEW AM
NOW OTHER HOME COM



Amiga 500 is here.

With a mind-blowing array of features and capabilities.

And a £499‡ price ticket (ex VAT), hundreds of pounds less than anyone could have predicted.

"...a miracle of compression..." writes *Popular Computing Weekly** "...it all adds up to a formidable system which is clearly better than anything else at the price."

This elegant little machine takes family computing into new dimensions of creativity, excitement and productivity.

It outruns and outguns office PCs as a business multi-tasker, performing a deskful of different jobs simultaneously, at over 7 million steps per second in realtime.

So other home computers may not be the only machines it consigns to the toy cupboard.

AMAZING SCIENCE FACT!

Amiga is used by Disney, Universal and other Hollywood studios for its dazzling 3D graphics manipulation and animation powers.

A sophisticated high-speed graphics processor called a blitter chip transforms images in realtime.

You can paint the screen with more than 4,000 colours. Create and modify designs and effects as you like, with pin-sharp resolution.

You command an almost limitless workshopful of stunning professional graphics capabilities.

With an optional Genlock interface, you can capture images off videotape. Manipulate and mix them with graphics. Then re-transfer them to videotape!

This means you can produce spectacular special effects like those created by Amiga computers for Channel 4's *Chart Show* and the American TV science fiction series *Amazing Stories.*

YOU AIN'T HEARD NOTHING YET!

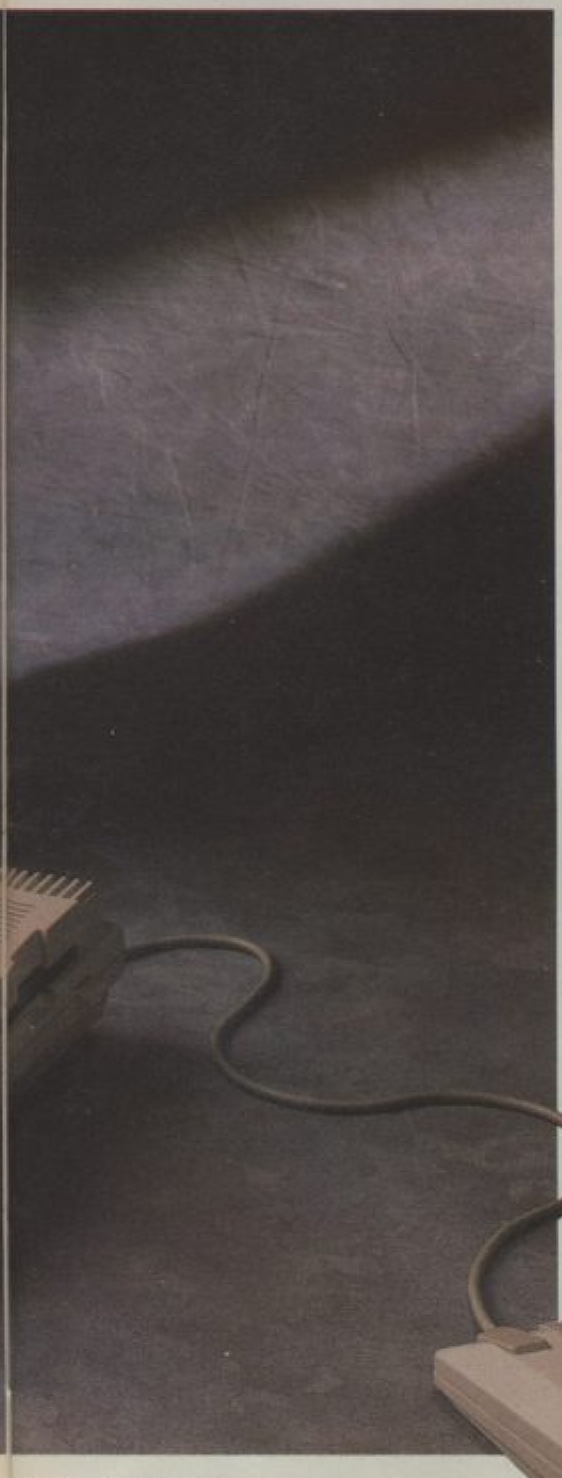
Concealed within the sleek Amiga shape, there is also a pro-quality sound synthesiser and four-track stereo sound system.

Driven by another powerful and unique custom chip, it can synthesise musical instruments and

‡Includes DeluxePaint from Electronic Arts worth £79 + VAT! (Excludes monitor or TV modulator.)

COMMODORE BUSINESS MACHINES (UK) LTD, COMMODORE HOUSE, THE SWITCHBACK, GARDNER ROAD, MAIDENHEAD, BERKSHIRE SL6 7XA. TELEPHONE: (0628) 770088. TELEX: 846057 CBMUKLG.

MIGA 500.
MPUTERS ARE JUST TOYS.



YET!
k
and
ful
n
and

sound effects.

An optional digitiser allows you to take onboard real sounds. Mix and modify the two. Translate your compositions from keyboard to sheet music. Play them back through the monitor's speaker or your hi-fi.

Your Amiga can also synthesise the human voice.

It can speak back anything you care to write on the keyboard.

So this is one computer that can not only word process with faultless professionalism, and incorporate superlative graphics into the text, it can also read the text back to you aloud.

GAMESMANSHIP AND WORKMANSHIP!

The new Amiga 500, in fact, dumbfounds its competitors in every way.

Graphics, stereo sound, multi windowing, multi screens, 512K to 1Mb RAM (expandable by an incredible 8 further megabytes externally**), 3½" internal disk drive with 880K of mass memory, 4 unique dedicated chips plus the 16/32-bit power and 7.14MHz speed of its central processor, communications and vast expansion potential all add up to a computer of immense professional capability.

Yet the same technology allows the Amiga 500 to play games so mind bending that only full-scale arcade machines have been able to play them until now.

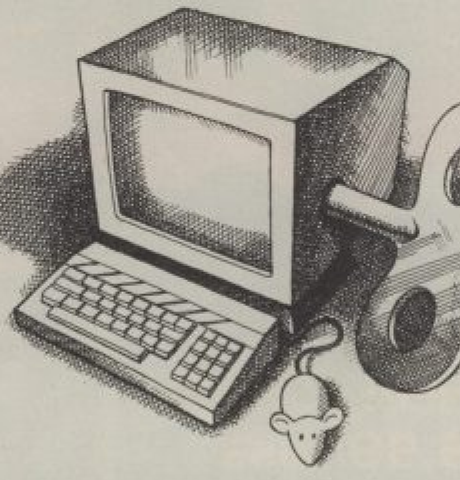
AND AMIGA MEANS 'FRIEND'!

However many of the Amiga's extraordinary talents you find yourself using, they will all be beautifully simple and natural.

You will be totally at home in the friendly and effortless Amiga environment, where everything happens by windows, icons, mouse and pulldown menus.

And the Amiga 500 simplifies life in another way too.

There is now no comparable home computer. At any price.



Try the astonishing new Amiga 500 at your nearest Commodore Amiga dealer.

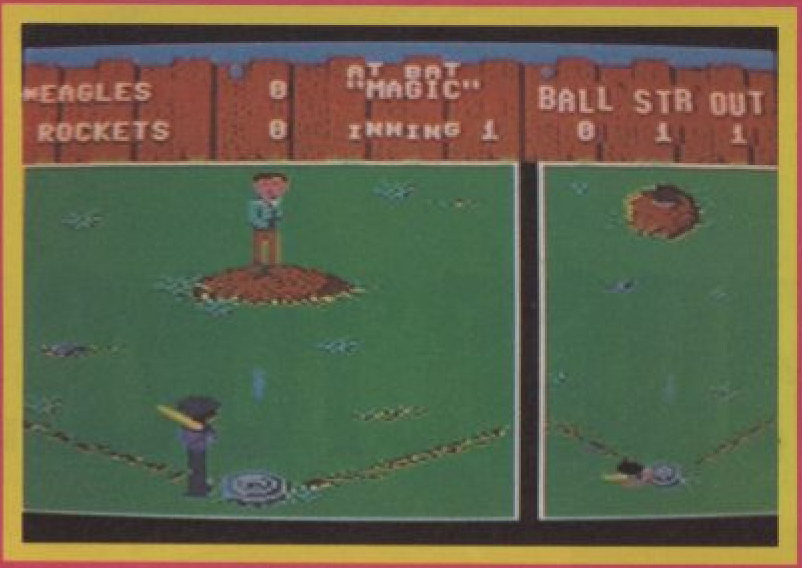
And discover why *Personal Computer World*†, having tested the graphics performance of Amiga's latest and most powerful rival, concluded "...Amiga still reigns supreme..."

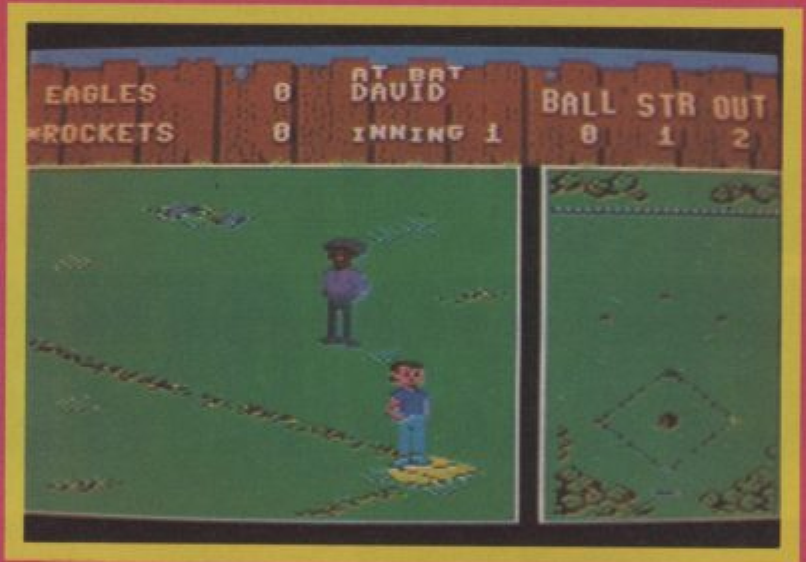
AMIGA

Commodore

**Popular Computing Weekly*, 22-28 May 1987. †*Personal Computer World*, February 1987. ***Subject to availability.*

MUKLG.





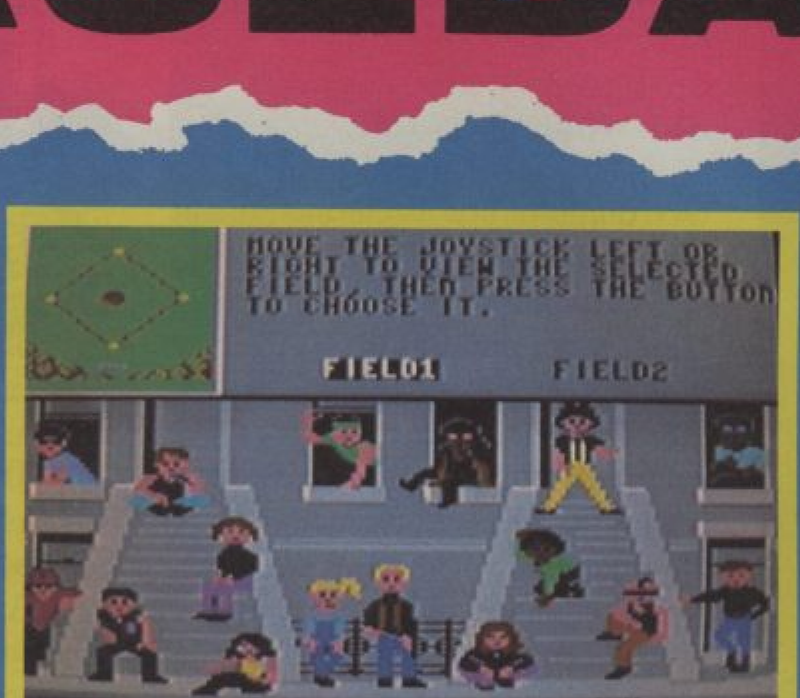
▲ The pitcher looks like a wimp

▲ First base no problems

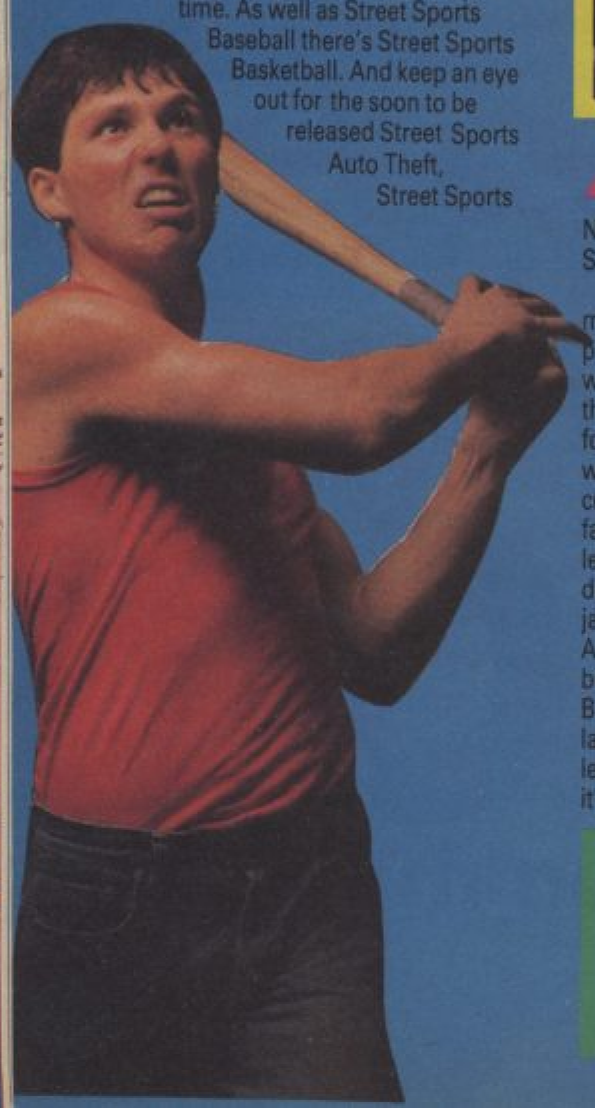
STREET SPORTS BASEBALL

64/128
Epyx
Price:
£9.99/cass
£14.99/disk

Epyx Street Sports series give you the chance to experience what the hard-up youth of America get up to in their spare time. As well as Street Sports Baseball there's Street Sports Basketball. And keep an eye out for the soon to be released Street Sports Auto Theft, Street Sports New York Mugging and Street Sports Race Gang Warfare.



▲ Meet the gang



Baseball, though, is altogether a more wholesome affair. You get to pick your own teams, decide whether to play in the parking lot or the vacant lot — which is American for an overgrown piece of wasteland. There are no cheering crowds in Street Sports Baseball, in fact all the trappings of the big league are absent. The bases are dustbin lids, old tyres and people's jackets. The ground isn't exactly Astroturf, it's littered with old tins, bottles and other hazardous objects. But Street Sports Baseball doesn't lack any of the excitement of its big league counterpart, in fact, because it's more like the kind of game you'd expect to have in real life, it's a lot more fun.

Once you've decided where you're going to play you must pick your team from the bunch of kids sitting on the steps. Each prospect is highlighted by a cursor and before coming to a decision you get a quick rundown of their capabilities and a little picture.

With team selection out of the way it's down to the parking lot and a toss of the coin to decide who bats first. The screen is split vertically in two with one half showing the pitcher and batter in close up — the way they show cricket on TV. The left half of the screen gives a full view of the pitch the moment the ball leaves the pitcher's hand.

The pitcher can do some, well, whacky things with the ball. You can swerve it right or left, speed it up, or slow it down during flight by moving the joystick in the required direction. You have to watch it though, the ball must go over the plate.

As with everything else, batting depends as much on the skills of your team as on you. To swing you must hit the fire button when the ball is directly over the plate. You'll either miss it or hit it — hopefully the latter. The aerial view shows exactly where the ball has gone while the left screen cuts to a close-up of the nearest fielder. If the ball is in the air and you can get the fielder underneath it they might catch it. If it's on the ground, or they fumble, they can throw to any of the bases.

This is where it gets really exciting. The screen then cuts to the base, where the fielder awaits the incoming ball. If it looks like your runner isn't going to make it you can pull back on the joystick and slide for safety.

The computer keeps track of the score throughout the nine innings, so there's no scope for cheating there either. I think Street Sports Baseball is brilliant, it's realistic, has all the elements of a real game — the kind ordinary people play — and is just as much fun.

Every game has something you can moan about, though, and this hangs up every now and then for a minute. It usually happens if you hit the striker with one of those wild, crazy pitches. They hobble to first, and no matter what you do you can't get a new bat to the plate, you just have to wait. Apart from that, it's first rate. I'm off to give Buciak another slamming.

Ken McMahon

Rating	Score (1–10)
Graphics	7
Sound	8
Toughness	6
Endurance	9
Value	7

8 Overall


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There are no random events in **XOR**'s labyrinthine palace and there is no premium on hand-eye coordination. You have all the time in the world to work out the precise nature of the hazards you encounter. Logical thinking, strategy and tactical problem solving are all part of the **XOR** experience. And **XOR** is not simply about finding solutions. If you can solve the entire puzzle (15 levels plus an encrypted anagram), you qualify to be a member of the **ORDER of XOR**, with a certificate and a badge to prove it.

"...this is one of the most compulsive, cunning and attractive programs I've seen for some time! .... the game is superb - a very classy original twist on the basic maze theme" A+B Computing (as reviewed on a BBC micro)

XOR's Features

- 15 graded mindbending mazes
- Each maze approximately 16 screens
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- High resolution quality graphics
- High speed or step-by-step replay
- Intriguing logical problems
- Interactive dynamic puzzles



Also included in the package is an **ICON DESIGNER** so that you can change the appearance of the game characters to baffle and delight your friends.



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Amstrad	Disk	£14.95
	Cassette	£9.95
BBC	Disk	£12.95
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Coming Soon for IBM PC and compatibles

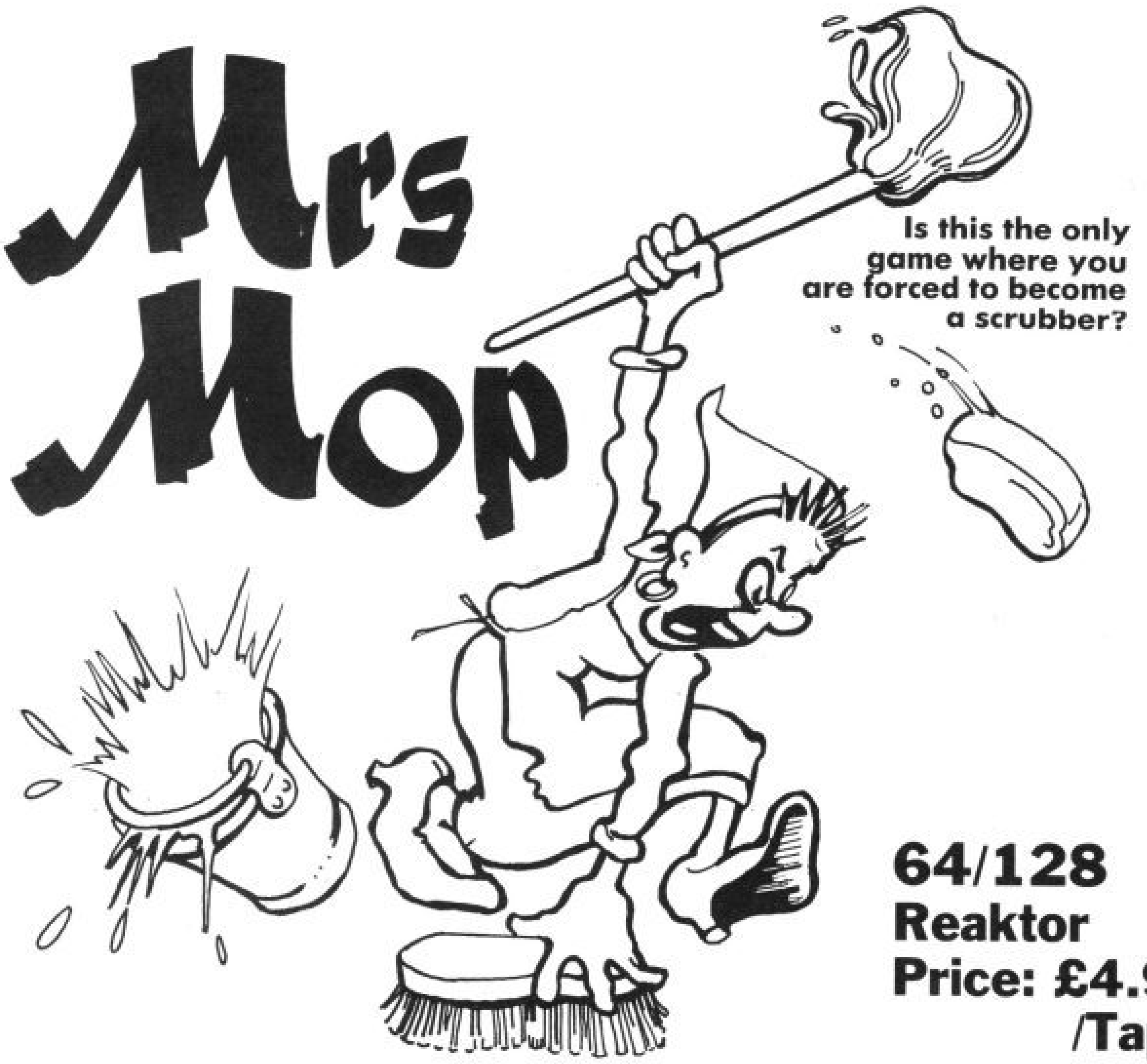
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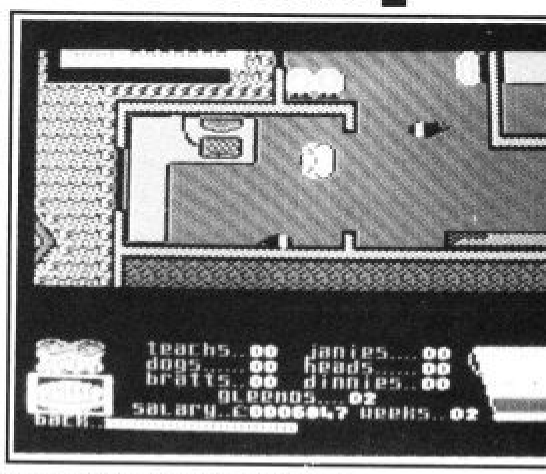
LOGOTRON
RECREATIONAL PRODUCTS

LOGOTRON RECREATIONAL PRODUCTS, DALES BREWERY, GWYDIR STREET, CAMBRIDGE [illegible]

Mrs Mop



Is this the only game where you are forced to become a scrubber?



64/128
Reaktor
Price: £4.99 /Tape

As you may have gathered, Mrs Mop is a cleaner. And what a vicious old bat she is too! But can you really blame her? For every day she must be up at the crack of dawn to clean the floors of Bounder Hall school. That may sound easy enough, but the annoying little scamps insist on running about the school and getting in her way.

Now Mrs Mop, usually a very timid lady, has taken it upon herself to become armed and dangerous, she has an artillery consisting of soap bars which will prove lethal to any pupil, when aimed properly! She has also taken 'Gleamo' a new wonder cleaning fluid, which by rights, you should need a licence to use. Can you take the role of the Rambo cleaner and literally (in the immortal words of most tough guys) "Clean up this place?"

Mrs Mop starts in the school with the task of cleaning two small rooms, so with bucket in one hand, soap in the other, and gleamos in a box marked 'highly toxic' off she trots.

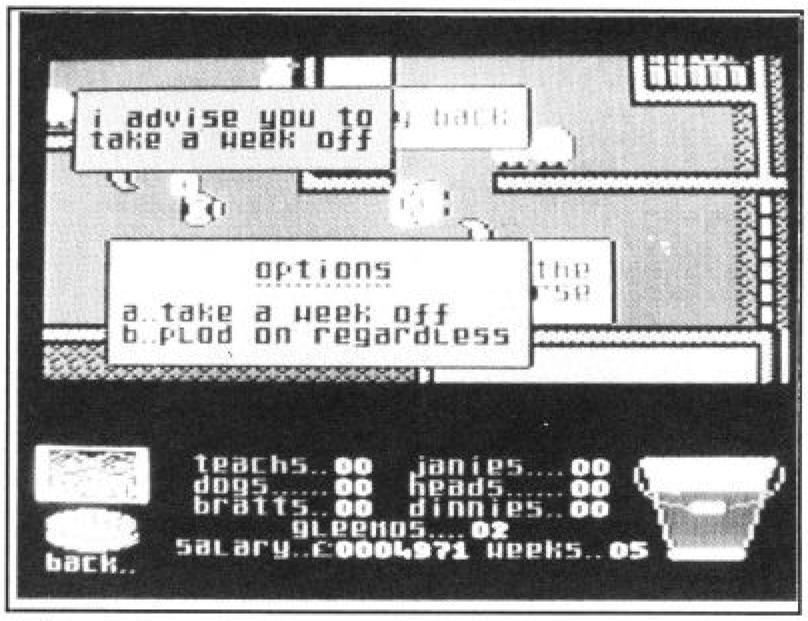
The screen view from above, is similar to the likes of Gauntlet, but that honestly is as far as the similarity goes.

When you first enter the school building you will notice that the floors are all a grey colour but once you run over them with your scrubbing brush and bucket, their true colour shines out. To clean the floor you must first make sure you are in scrubbing brush mode (not in soap mode) and then just run over the dirty patches on the floor whilst holding down your fire button.

To clear each level you must not only clean the floors, but also kill all the scum that attempt to get in your way. "Scum", that is, if you are a cleaner, and that's what you regard pupils and teachers as. Well, anyway, you've got to kill these by lobbing a deadly soap bar at their . . . (*use your imagination! — Ed.*). The other way to get rid of the nasties is to use one of the deadly toxic Gleamos. Gleamo is a strong, new detergent bomb.

To add to her grief, poor old violent Mrs Mop also has a bad back. When it is touched by any of the invaders it gets even worse. The school nurse will then proceed to advise you to take a week off. You then have the choice of ignoring the silly old quack's advice and carrying on your job, or taking a week off. The trouble is you can't just sad the nurse and carry on bringing in the dough, because if you choose to ignore her advice and your back goes again this time the injury could mean early retirement from your favoured profession. Still, if you do decide to take a week off you are fine, but then you only have a fairly small score. So it's up to you to decide when you feel your lumbago deserves a rest.

Even with that nurse caper the game doesn't sound too hard, you might think. Wrong. Once you've commenced scouring anything can happen. For one thing your back could go. Another problem, which I haven't yet mentioned, is that your bucket could need refilling, in which case you'd have to hike all the way to the nearest bathroom. And there's also one other niggling hassle which makes me want to scoop out my eyeballs with a desert spoon, which is that when you go bump into a certain kind of nasty he dirties the whole of the floor surrounding you. But the worst thing, oh yes, believe me this is the pits, is that when you wish to swap between soap (attack) mode, and brush (clean) mode, you have to hit the return key. When you have to hit the return key you are usually doing it in a state of panic and do not have time to make sure that return is the only key you're hitting. Well, you'd better find time to check, because if you should wander to *Return*'s neighbour *Restore*, the game will crash and you will have to reload. A pain not needed.



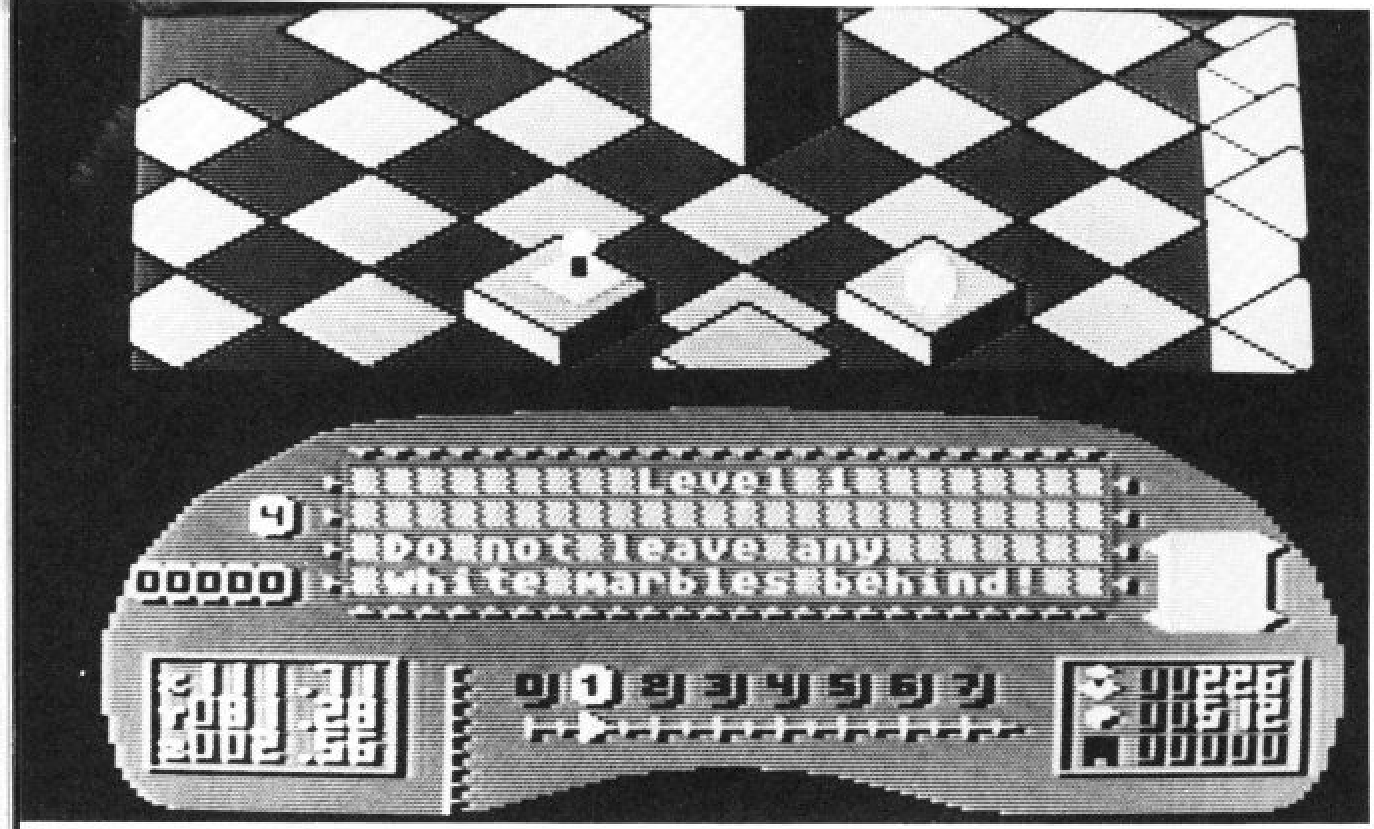
▲ **The school nurse advises you to take a week off.**

Apart from the above prob (which I am promised will be rectified for you lot) the game is great. A good sadistic little creation from Reaktor, who are now beginning to produce some excellent products. This little number isn't spectacular enough to be in the realms of the exalted Screen Star. But I do have a feeling that — for under a fiver — it's going to while away a lot of your boredom this long, unhot, summer

Ferdy Hamilton

Graphics	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Sound	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Toughness	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Endurance	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Value	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

7
Overall



◀ **Hard man Scolding piles up the criticisms.**

pile up

C64/128 Reaktor/ Ariolasoft Price: £9.99/cass £12.99/disk

▼ **Reaktor — promising new label let down slightly by Pile Up.**

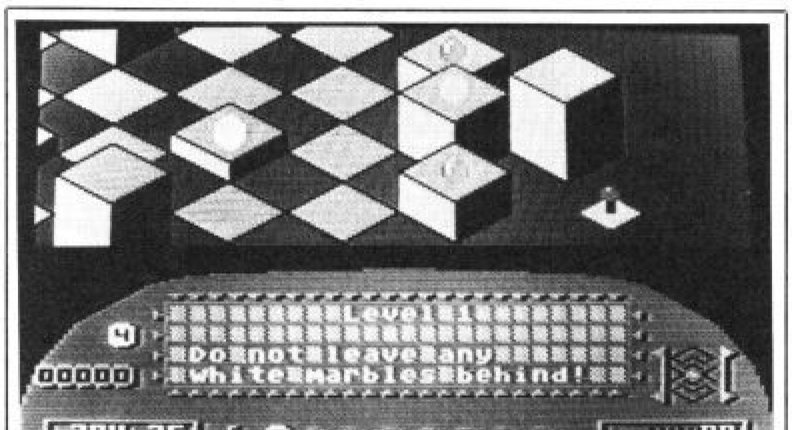
It seems that whenever a programmer comes up with an abstract game involving marbles and chessboards, the software house has to dress it up in some infantile space-age garbage. Is this because they consider Joe Public too bloody thick to understand a game concept unless it's explained in terms of stange planets and galatic spacecraft?

The instructions for *Pile Up!* could have been written on the back of a matchbox, but the cassette inlay witters on endlessly about the energy crisis of the distant future, power stations and marble pilots. A load of tosh that boils down to this: Collect the balls from the chequerboard with your jet-propelled craft, steer between the rising columns, and deposit them at the transformer station where your score is registered.

A game as obviously fatuous as this isn't going to burn up the charts unless it's (a) great fun; (b) horribly difficult; or preferably (c) both. With *Pile-Up* it's (b) only, the challenge resting entirely on your ability to control your joystick. The faster your craft flies, the more difficult it is to control, and the more it crashes into floor, ceiling and columns.

The chequerboard is a 16 × 16 grid, seen in perspective 3D along its longest diagonal. On some of the squares are black marbles, and as these squares rise the marbles change colour, turning gradually from black to white to blue and, eventually, to red, when the square is at its highest point.

The instruction panel below issues you with your orders for each level. On level one you must collect all the white marbles, each worth 100 energy points. On level two you move on to the dark blue marbles, which are worth less and, being higher, are more difficult to pick up. And so it goes until you reach level seven, where the red marbles are so close to the ceiling that you can scarcely reach them.



Your craft moves swiftly — too swiftly — across this scrolling area, bouncing off every surface, using up its energy rapidly. The trick is to move it at a snail's pace, giving yourself plenty of time to avoid obstacles and home in on the marbles. There's no limit, and as the game is over only when your energy runs out. The slower you move, the longer you play.

Like the inlay instructions, the on-screen dashboard is designed to make the game seem more complex than it really is. Most of the digital displays you can safely ignore, especially the 'numerical values of the x, y, z speed coordinated', and concentrate instead on those which tell you how much energy you've got left, and how much you've collected. Also crucial is the tiny overhead scanner which shows your position relative to the square which you're above.

Collecting a marble requires some very precise manoeuvring, as you hovver over it, watching the scanner, nudging your stick slightly until you're exactly on top of the ball. Once collected, the marble makes the craft heavier and sluggish, and you'll need to keep it afloat by constantly hitting the fire button on your way to the transformer station.
You don't get much help in all this. To one side of the chequerboard is a cafe where you can rest a while, and next to it is a service area, where your craft can replenish some spent energy by drawing on the reserves it has already accumulated. But this is hardly worthwhile — you can lose more energy getting to the service area than you're likely to gain.

Other than being stupidly frustrating, there's not much in *Pile-Up!* to recommend it. Graphics and sound are nothing to write home about, although I did like the title screen being part of the scrolling playing are, so that every time you fly over it you get a quick burst of the opening tune (an authentic reproduction of an inept guitarist tuning up in a squash court).

That's *Pile-Up!*, then. A very demanding and very expensive game that's not much fun to play and will appeal to only a few. Oi'll give it four.

Bill Scolding

	Rating (1–10)
Graphics	5
Sound	4
Toughness	9
Endurance	6
Value	4

4 Overall

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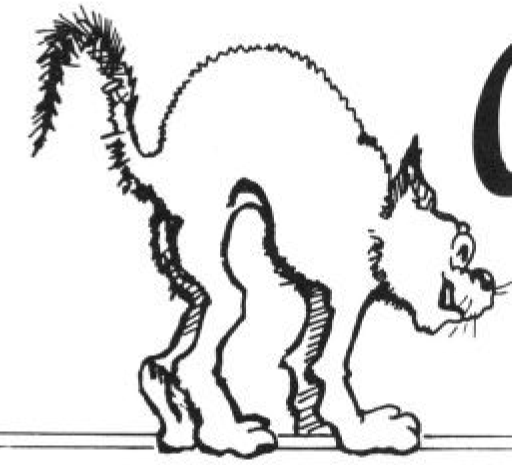
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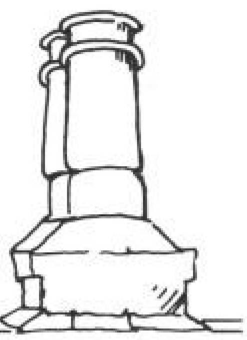
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On The Tiles

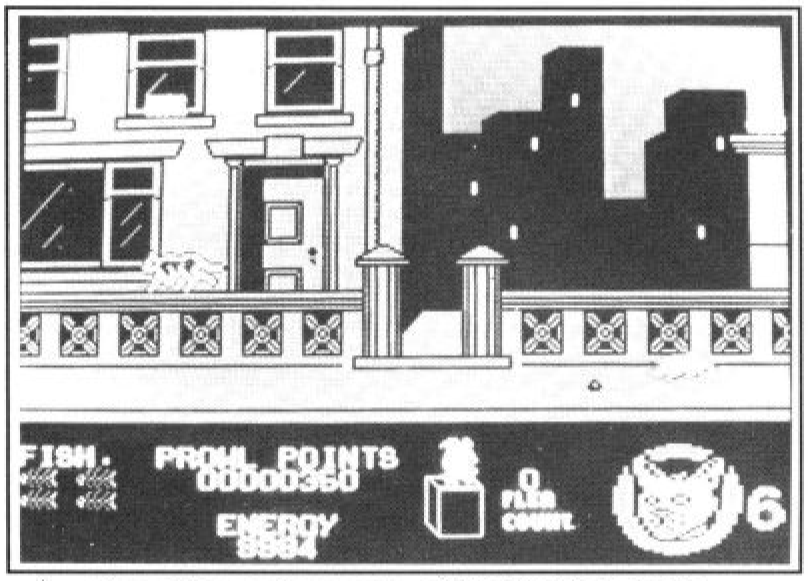


64/128
Odin/Firebird
Price: £7.95 /cass £12.95/disk

The last time I came across anything from the once-great Odin, it was a pathetic effort called *UFO*, a game that is probably best forgotten by all concerned. Now the legendary scouse programmers have returned with a couple of games, *On The Tiles* and *Scary Monsters* (reviewed elsewhere), which show signs of their former glory.

On The Tiles is light years away, in subject matter at least, from the likes of *Nodes of Yesod* and *Robin of the Wood*, those jolly arcade adventures for which Odin are best remembered. For starters, the game is all about cats.





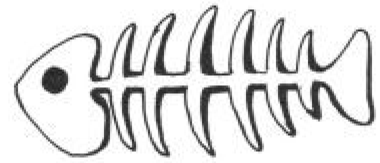
▲ **Should have been one of Firebird's budget games.**

Sounds a bit wimpy, right? Then how about this: it's a game all about prowling cats staking out their territory, battling against owls and hedgehogs, spitting at frogs and giant fleas, scouring the rooftops in a desperate quest for kippers.

Still sounds a bit wimpy? Well, I can't help that — it wasn't my idea. But let's skip right on to the gameplay, and hope that things hot up a little here.

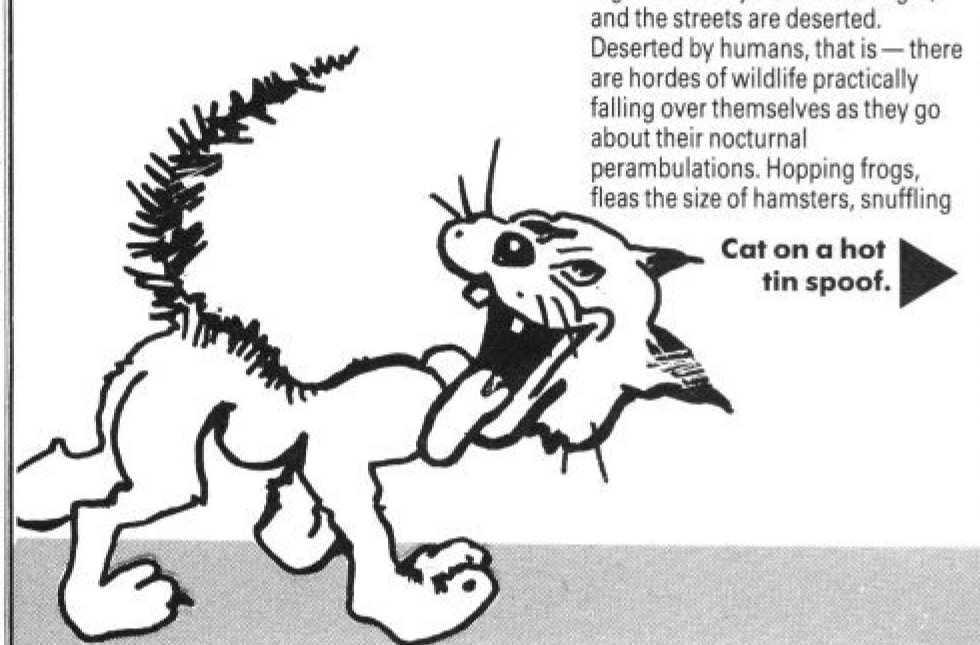
Play begins in a scrolling cityscape of crappy sidewalks, dark buildings, walls, fences and distant high-rises. It's just after midnight, and the streets are deserted. Deserted by humans, that is — there are hordes of wildlife practically falling over themselves as they go about their nocturnal perambulations. Hopping frogs, fleas the size of hamsters, snuffling hedgehogs, pigeons, owls. . . . there are even some of those horrible miniature dogs.

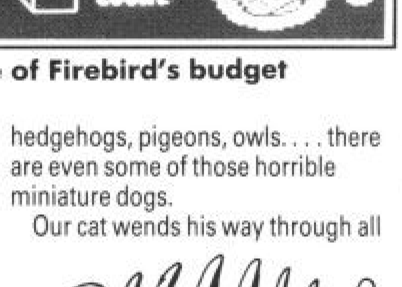
Our cat wends his way through all



this animal traffic, eating up the pigeons and making short work of the dwarf dogs (yeh!) for valuable energy points, and avoiding or spitting at the rest of the zoo. Hedgehogs are deadly, while fleas and frogs merely drain energy reserves. But the owl is the one to watch for — a sudden flapping noise announces its arrival, quickly followed by its swooping form as it dives straight for the cat, pursuing it relentlessly.

Cat on a hot tin spoof. ▶





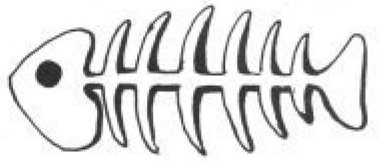
If it wasn't for the owl, the whole business would be a piece of cake. The cat has nine lives — of course — and can deal easily with most bugs and beasties, leaping gracefully from wall to window to roof, munching fishbones on the way. When all four fish on the first level have been found, running off the playing area to either left or right will take the cat into the next street, where the number of fish increases, as do the predators.

The owl makes all this very difficult, however, appearing at precisely the wrong moments, and once it's embarked on its hunting it's almost impossible to shake off until either fowl or feline is dead.

All this action is beautifully animated, and the cat is probably one of the most realistically animated creatures I've seen on a computer screen. Whether prowling, running, leaping or even standing still, everything it does is fluid and natural.

The game is challenging, too. The six levels are progressively tricky but not so impossible that you give up entirely. A lot of forethought and strategy is called for, as you plan the cat's movements through each level, and some fish on subsequent levels can only be reached if the cat enters at roof-top level from the previous screen.

And there are some nice little touches, like the dancing mouse on the information display, and the boots and buckets which rain down from first-floor windows. There's also another cat, and your moggy



will only survive a cat-fight if it has sufficient energy.

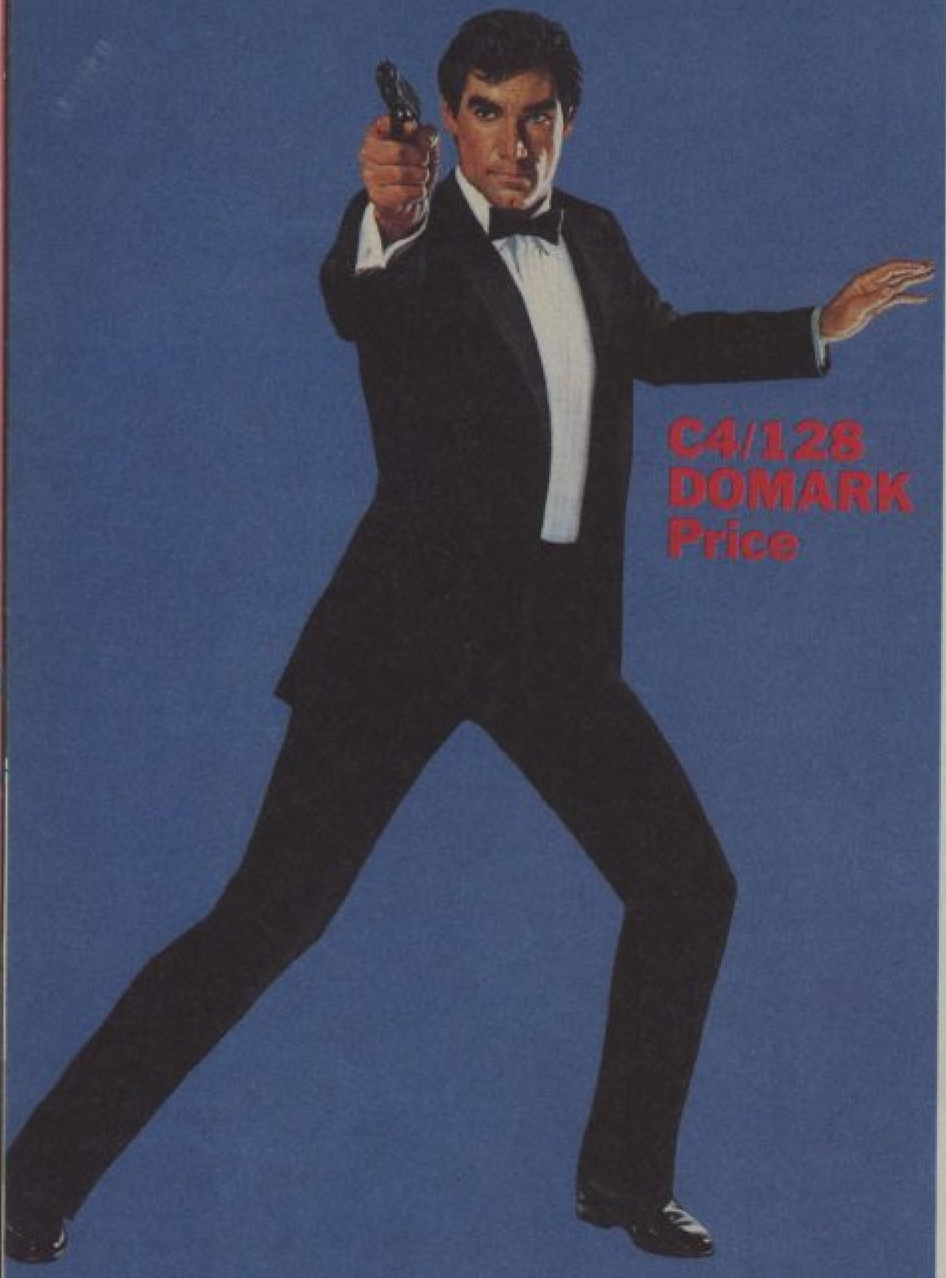
But the game is also pretty irritating, particularly if played with a joystick. Quite unnecessarily, the stick can only be used for running and jumping, while spitting (an activity which is demanded frequently) is operated by the space bar. And there's no high-score table.

These flaws shouldn't spoil your enjoyment too much, and the game really deserves to sell moderately well. But it won't, because after the likes of *Barbarian* and the rest of the tits 'n' gore brigade *On The Tiles* is going to seem a mite tame. It's the sort of pleasant entertainment which would have gone down well on a budget label, but is going to make no waves at all in the mid-price range.

Bill Scolding

	Rating (1–10)
Graphics	8
Sound	6
Toughness	7
Endurance	7
Value	6
Overall	**5**


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C4/128
DOMARK
Price

THE LIVING DAYLIGHTS

In the "The Living Daylights" Domark have produced a game faithful to both the film script and the Bond theme whilst including all the elements that make a game a good one— great graphics, fast action and well thought out ideas. The only thing missing is the sex, but then you can't have everything.

Simple ideas often make the best games and The Living Daylights is based on one of the simplest. The basis of the entire game is the old firing range idea where targets pop up all over the screen and you must target them with a crosshair sight and finish them off with the trusty old Walther PPK or whatever else is handy. Ordinarily I'd slag the living daylights out of such an old and as cliched idea, but here it's used with such imagination it's hard to be critical.

There are eight levels in all, each one closely based on part of the original screenplay. The action kicks off in Gibraltar, where Bond and his SAS pals are having fun shooting each other with paint guns. One of those unsporting KGB types is in on the game and is using live ammunition instead of the non-drip stuff. Bond must make his way through rough terrain picking off the hooded gunmen en route. This kind of thing would fall flat on its face if the animation were not first class. James runs across the screen as the terrain slips smoothly and silently by in the background. The only thing that gives him away is the sound of his footsteps crunching on the gravel under-foot. Suddenly two hooded figures appear from behind a rock and shots ring out from the TV speaker. Pressing on the fire button and with a swift backward pull on the joystick, Bond throws himself into a forward somersault, narrowly avoiding the flying bullets (or was it Dulux matt vinyl emulsion?). Either way he can't afford to take chances, a direct hit takes its toll on his energy meter. If it runs out you get another four chances (You only live five times?) but it's a long game. Before the attackers have time to get in a second shot, 007 takes aim, the crosshair sight moves swiftly across the screen and pauses over the head of the first gunman long enough for a single shot to ring out. As the lifeless body slumps to the ground the second assailant falls victim to the same fate, the joystick moves far right, the sights disappear from the screen and once again 007 is on his way.

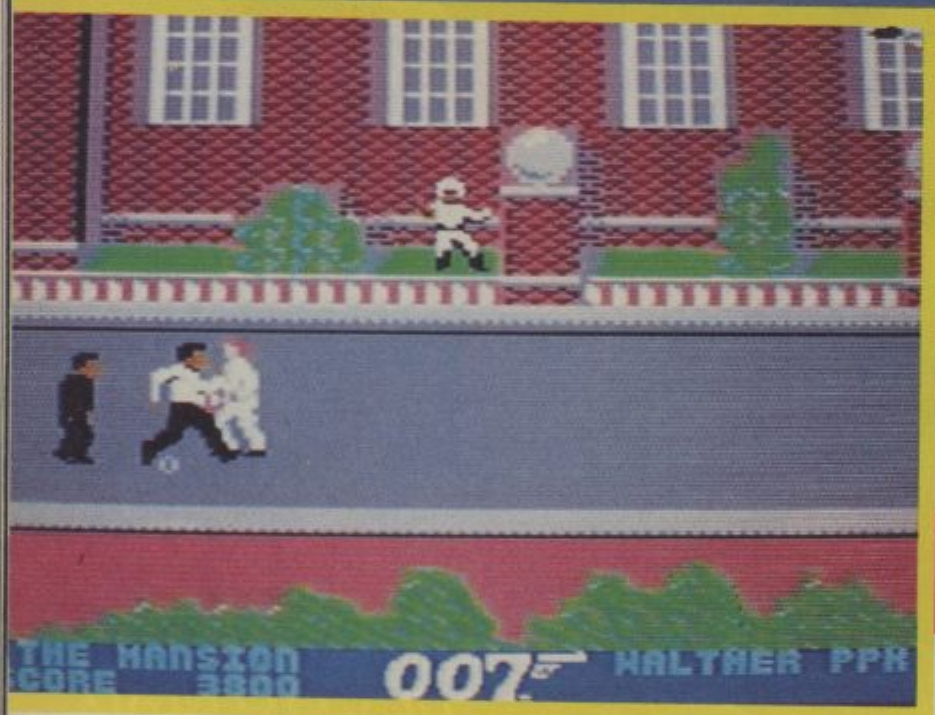
Before the next scene, where bond must rescue KGB double agent Koskov from music loving assassins



Bond has selected the grenade.

Bond selects his Walther PPK for the pipeline scene.





Huge scraps at The Mansion



at the Lenin People's Music Conservatory, you get to choose an additional weapon from Q's armoury of cleverly devised and disguised hardware. From here on in, at every stage of the game you get to take along one weapon from a choice of four. It's important to make the right choice. There's nothing more aggravating for a secret agent than discovering you've brought along the bazooka when what you really want is your missile firing pen. For the second level I heartily recommend the infra sight which helps you distinguish the real assassins from the general concert going public.

Going to the concert involves much the same kind of tactics as playing with paint in Gibraltar. The scenery is different and you've got Koskov pretending to be your shadow, but it's still a question of blasting everything with a hood on. First select the infra sight from the status panel at the bottom of the screen, then reselect the PPK — you can't shoot anything with an infra sight.

If you manage to get Koskov past the concert snipers, which is not too difficult, the next job is to smuggle him past the pipe workers so he can be fed into the Trans-Siberian gas pipeline and emerge in the West. This is tricky. Your choice of additional equipment should take into account the debilitating effect that a large piece of pipe can have when thrown at you from above — in other words, take the hard hat. In addition to forward somersaults, 007 can jump, duck and trip over things. If you are to avoid terminal damage on the energy meter a good deal of acrobatics will be necessary.

Having despatched Koskov down the Trans-Siberian pipeline you next have to stop the Russians stealing him back from his mansion house hide-out. If you've seen the film then you'll know that this is the scene where hard man Necros does his act with the exploding milk bottles. As well as the Molotov milk bottles you have to disable the helicopter. The bazooka puts it out of action for a while, but not permanently, you could try the mortar but I doubt whether a bomb or dynamite would do the trick.

The next two levels, Tangiers and the Afhgan military complex are again quite similar to Gibraltar. The scenery is different and there are a lot more gunmen about which makes any kind of progress difficult for all but the most sharp shooting and agile of Bonds. The same applies to level eight in which the evil Brad Whittaker, American arms dealer, and loony military historian, hurls what look like bits of Trans-Siberian pipeline at you. The pipeline comes thick and fast and it's one hell of a job to shoot and dodge at the same time.

It's fairly obvious that whoever designed the game was running short of ideas or time towards the end. The blame for that, as well as the credit for the game's good points (and there are lots of those) can probably be put down to the fact it's based not only the film, but on the Arcadia coin-op.

As far as the film itself goes, I have to say that I think it's the worst Bond ever. The Bond in my version of the game was a better actor than Timothy Dalton and in fact playing the game was altogether more enjoyable than watching the film. Having said that, the game follows the film script so closely that if you don't go and see it, you'll definitely be missing out. Full marks to Domark, better luck next time Albert Brocolli.

Ken McMahon

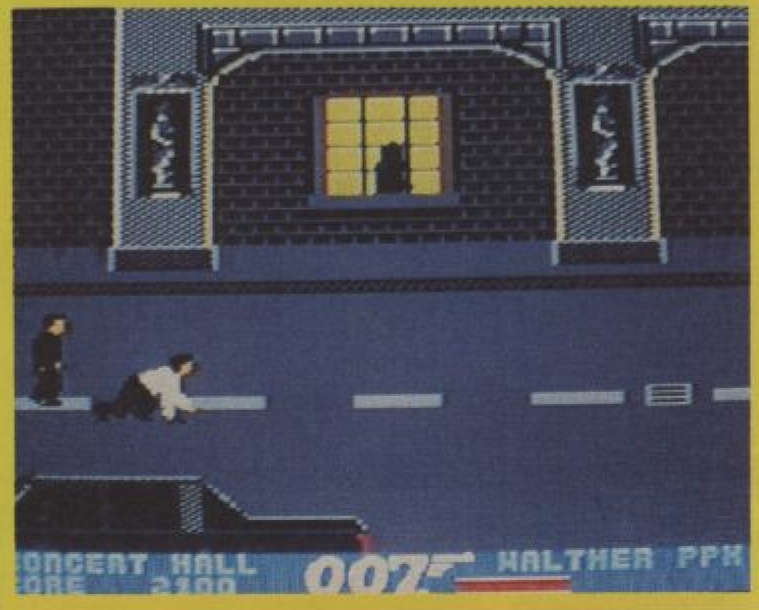


The Fairground — shoot the balloons.



The sun-kissed buildings of Gibraltar.

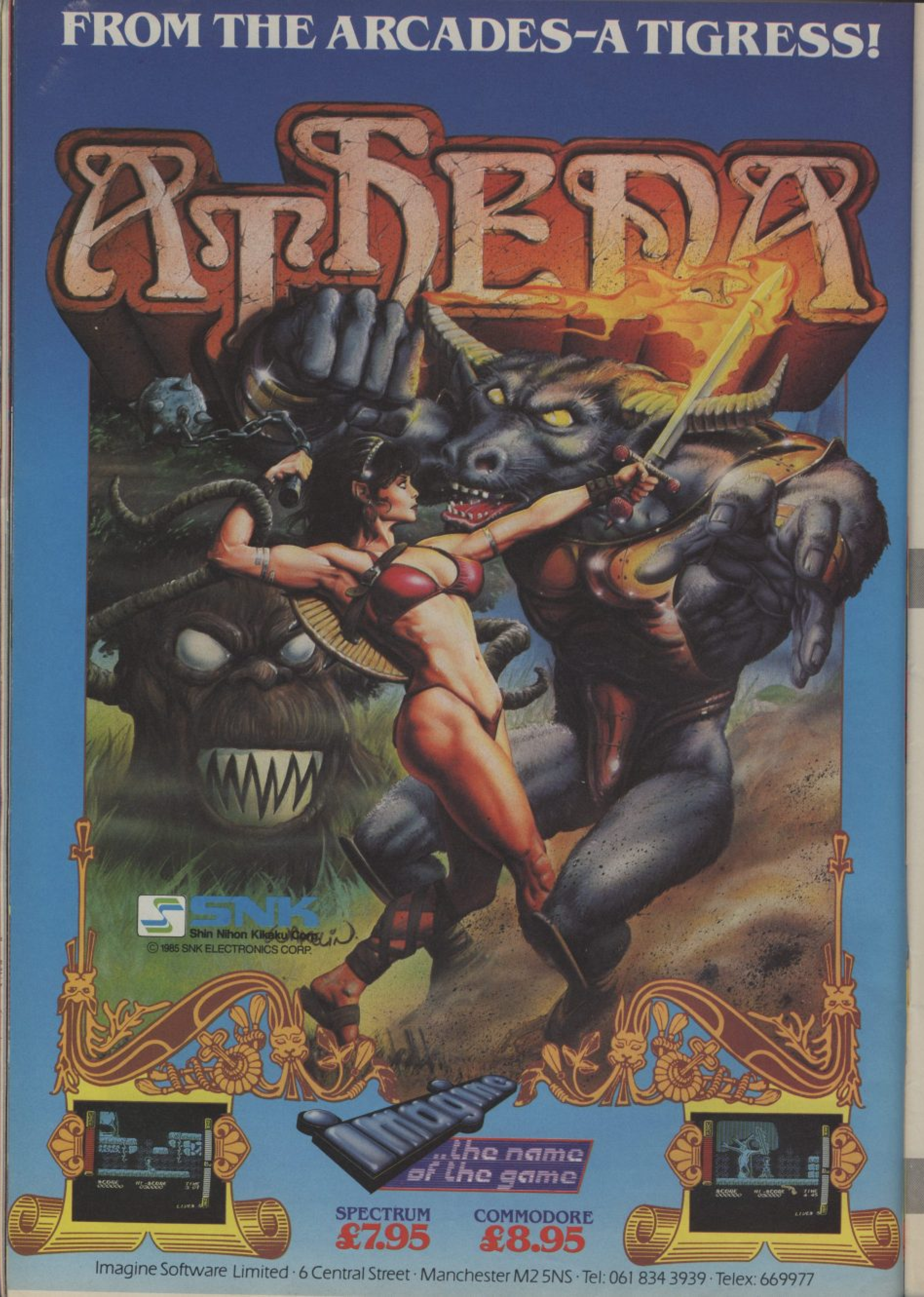
THE LIVING DAYLIGHTS



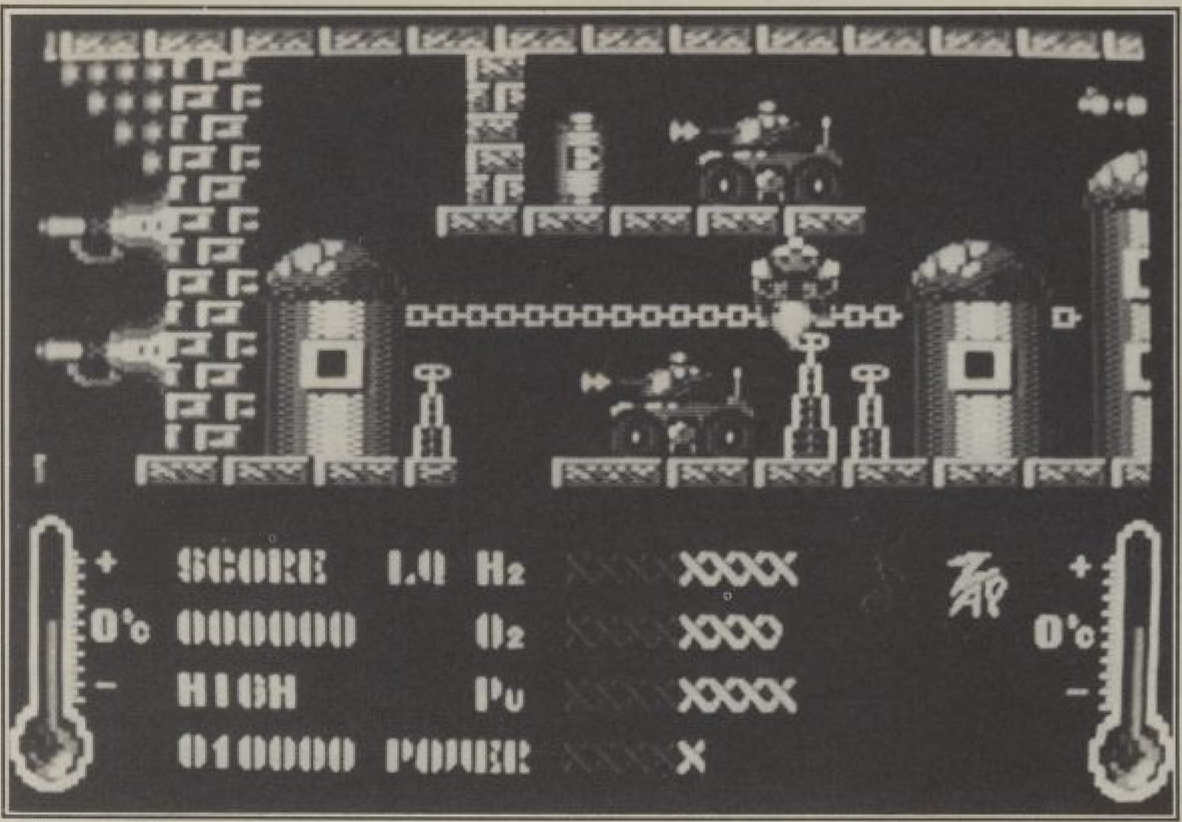
Fighting in the street — watch the silhouette.

Graphics	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Sound	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Toughness	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Endurance	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Value	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

8 Overall

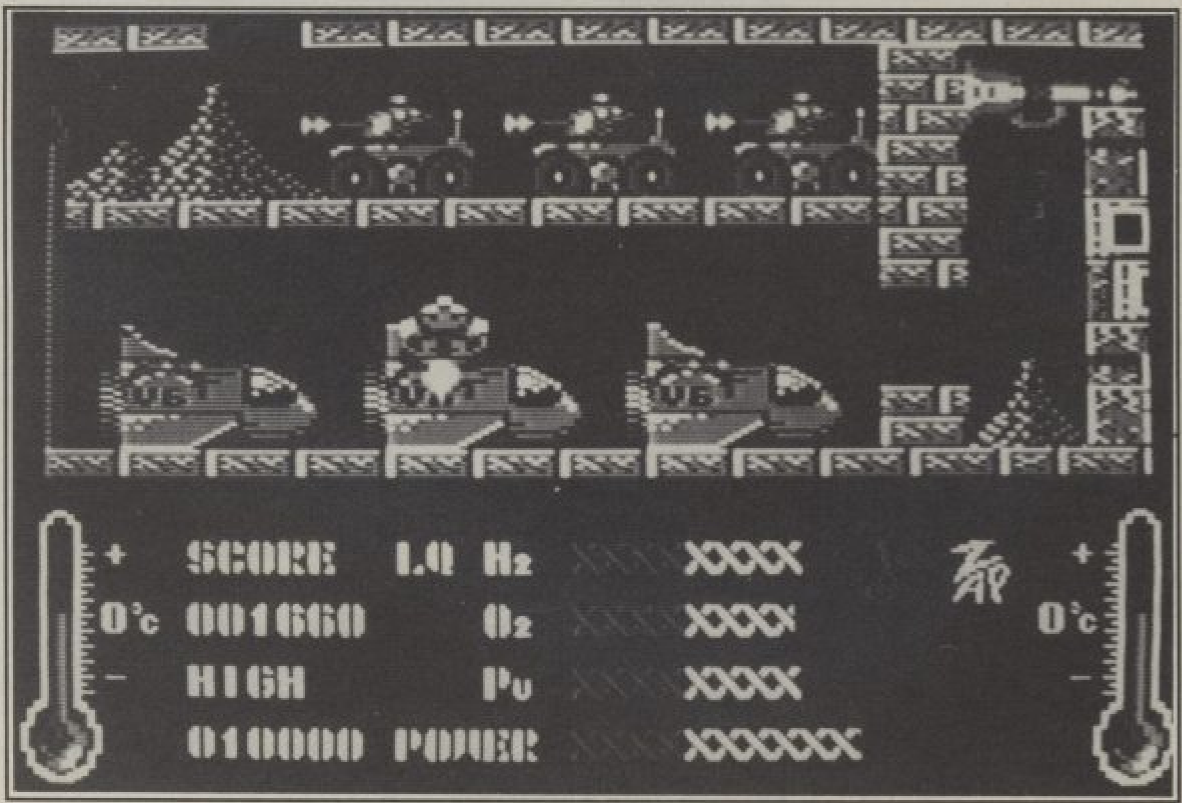


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Tanks a lot.

toad force





Look like space shuttles to me.

Where's our frog?

C64/128
Players
Price: £2.99

Here we go. A particularly cute, colourful game, with more than a hint of frogism. This frog is metal he's powered by a mixture of liquid hydrogen, plutonium and oxygen, all helping to keep froggy at the right temperature. I mean, boil in the bag toad's just not on is it? So our intrepid frog sets off to hop, skip and jump through the various layers of strata that surrounds a small planet. When you reach the end of one of the layers of strata you get the all too familiar guardian, kill him and hop on to the the next layer, which is naturally deadlier than the previous. One false move and your legs will no doubt find themselves on the plate of Msr Mangetout.

A good sense of timing prevails overall in this game, so it's a case of if you spot any of the pods be extra careful when you gribbet or you might end up hopping mad as your entrails are scattered to the four corners of the planet's strata. So can the ultimate attack system defeat the ultimate defense system?

Like I said earlier, this is a cute game. The graphics are lovely with an abundance of colour and a great variety of piccies. A positive profusion of picturesque pixels. In short, this is especially for a budget game. The sound's quite good as well with a catchy little tune which can be switched off or just left on to while away the game.

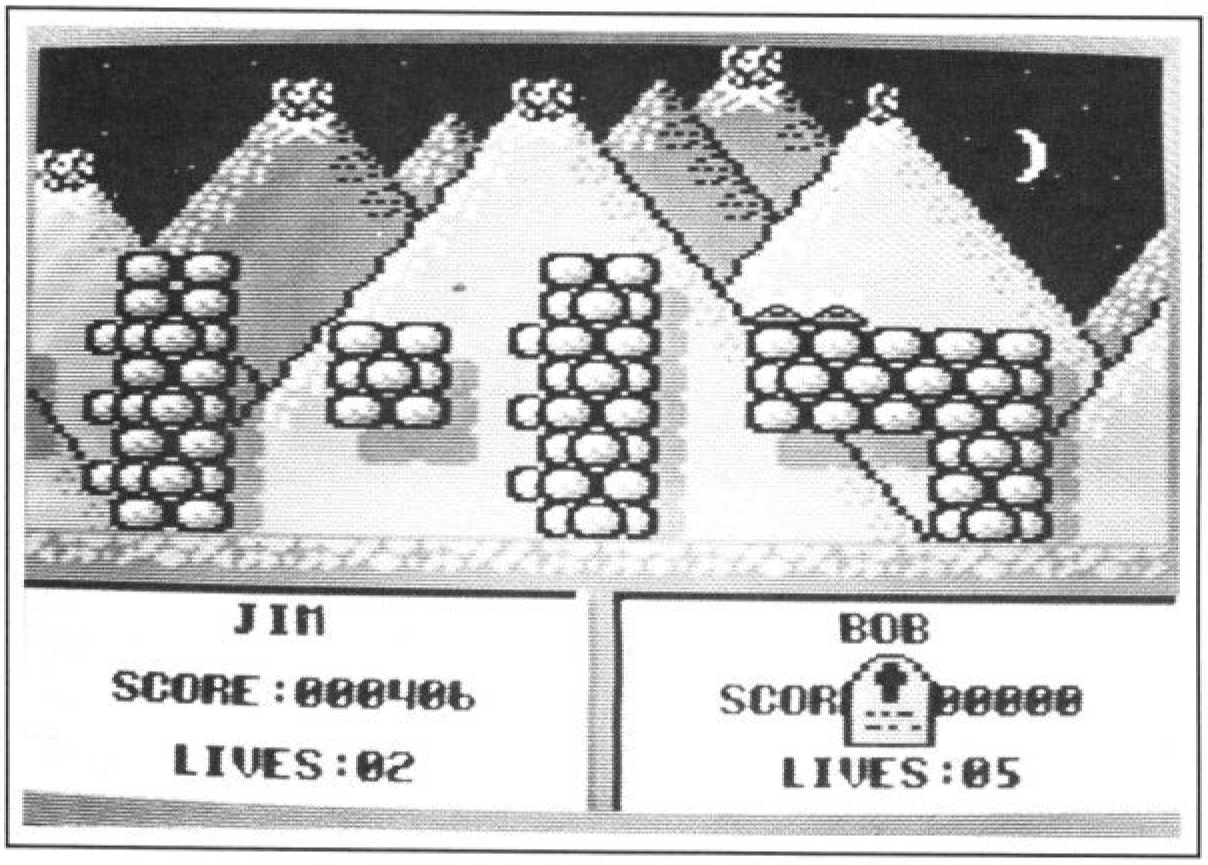
There are a few little special effects which help to increase the already high standard of the game. Oh there's also the familiar Players load-a-game, which is nothing more than a *Crazy Painter* type thing, but it helps to pass the aeons tape loading.

And as for a question which many people will not doubt ask, is it as good as *Fungus*? The answer is yes. It's certainly more colourful, and more absorbing and addictive, a totally different format of a game, but technically equal, if not better. Even if you're not one for the budget regime at three quid it represents great value. *Toad Force* in the eyes of this reviewer is most definitely one of the best budget releases in many moons. One that should definately be rated along with *I Ball* and the other titles who try to imitate full price games, and get away with it.

Mark Patterson

Graphics	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Sound	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Toughness	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Endurance	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Value	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

8
Overall



Deliverance—Power House's first Cheapo of the Month.

DELIVERANCE

64
THE POWER HOUSE
Price: £1.99/cass

Last month I had the misfortune to mess with Hewson's Exolon, an amazingly difficult and tedious hop, skip and zap platform shoot 'em up. Now, hot on its heels comes Deliverance, from The Power House, a game that's superficially similar, almost as difficult, and which has opened up all my blisters.

Like Exolon, this game dispenses with any attempts at a plot. Instead, we're harangued by some hysterical gibberish on the back cover, which for reasons that are obscure is somehow intended to motivate you into buying it:

'Lean, hungry, desparate [sic] Bastoids charged with the Maxim of Rascal. No mattock for you matoid — you fool or half genius wally-wally . . .'

Well, that's quite enough of that. But don't be put off by this cretinous claptrap or even by the cover illustration which sets new standards in total irrevelance. No, just go ahead and buy it, throw away the inlay. and get stuck in.

Deliverance is played out against a horizontally-scrolling landscape with walls and ledges picked out with shadows against a background of smouldering volcanos. Across this obstacle course moves your chunky little space-person. The first thing you notice is that the scenery scrolls constantly, whether you're moving or not, and if you stand around gawping then the lefthand side of the screen will crush you against the nearest wall.

So this is one of those games that you play by the seat of your pants, always moving, always keeping one step ahead of the scenery , but ensuring that you don't move so fast that you can't see what's ahead.

Start by picking up some fire-power by walking past the bobbing raygun, and then scramble up the next wall and start leaping from platform jumping over landmines, looking out for pools of fire, and firing a hail of bullets at the approaching nasties.

You get five lives to a game, and build up a score by killing off the enemy, which range in value form one to 100-plus. There are six levels of around 30 screens apiece, and your progress through each level is charted by the radar panel below the screen.

That's about all there is to it, and it's quite enough to be getting on with. The whole thing is about as easy as hopping over hurdles on a fast-moving conveyor belt, but, just when you're giving up in despair, you manage to get just that little bit further, notching up a higher score, and you're hooked for another hour.

Which is what addiction is all about.

Deliverance is slick and competent, and programmer Andy Jervis certainly knows his onions. The real icing on the cake (onions and cake — Yuk! Ed.), however, is the two-player option, where spaceman Jim is joined by robot Bob for some simultaneous competitive action. That, and the ludicrously cheap £1.99 price-tag, puts it way ahead of rivals like Exolon.

Power House are slowly but surely emerging as a force to be reckoned with. Note — this is their fourth rave review in CU.

Bill Scolding

Graphics	7
Sound	6
Toughness	9
Endurance	8
Value	9

8 Overall

CHEAPO — of the month

DEST

64/128
Bulldog Software
Price: £1.99/cass

Some people simply can't bring themselves to throw rubbish away. Take Mastertronic, instead of hiring a Skrappo mini-skip and dumping all their duff games, they go and publish them on a different label — Bulldog 'Best of British' Software. Destructo may be cheap, but 'best' it certainly isn't.

Dr Destructo is one of those crazy cookies that plan world domination from the confines of budget games. You, as the pilot of a crummy little bi-plane, must stop him by spending a few hours in a mindless trance, zapping his assortment of graphically interior flying thingies.

There are 21 screens of this brain-numbing stuff to endure, until Dr Desructo calls it quits and goes off to devote the rest of his life to organic gardening.

The first few screens each feature one of Destructo's battleships, above which his little planes buzz around like flies around a mouldy pork pie. You buzz around too and try to shoot them down. As they fall from the sky in a blaze of fiery scrap metal (it doesn't look quite as spectacular as that) they crash onto the ship. Enough hits and the ship springs a leak. Keep on zapping until you've sprung three leaks and then watch the ship go down.

Screen two — keep on zapping until the ship goes down. Screen three — keep on zapping until the ship sinks. Screen four — keep on zapping until the ship goes under. After a few more ships, you get to the buildings. Buildings don't sink, they crumble.

To make things that bit more exciting, some of the blue bits are occasionally substituted for black bits. The blue bits in question are sky and the occasional black bits are also sky. This cunning programming feat gives you the impression of night-time flying. As the screens progress, Destructo's planes get

TRUCTO

nastier and some of them actually crash into you and make you lose a life.

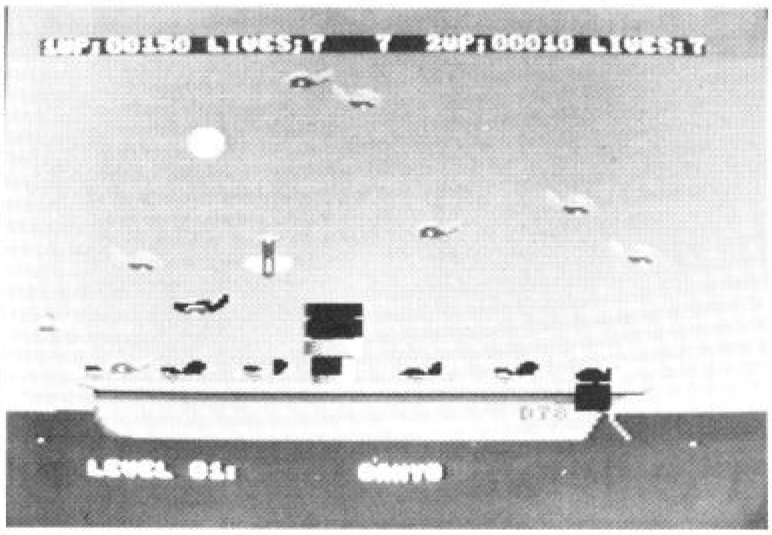
There are a few curious things about this game. Like your plane which can be controlled only in its direction of flight — it keeps on going whatever you do. Fly it into the briney and it miraculously reappears at the top of the screen.

a ship shudder before. Thanks Mastertronic.

At least there's a two-player option in which you can use teamwork to overcome the boredom. At the end of each screen, you get a points display for each player, and a blast of music that isn't half bad as budget-tunes go.

I reckon that underneath it all, Dr

▼ **Makes The Straits of Hormuz look like a milk round.**





▲ **Night time but the battle still rages.**

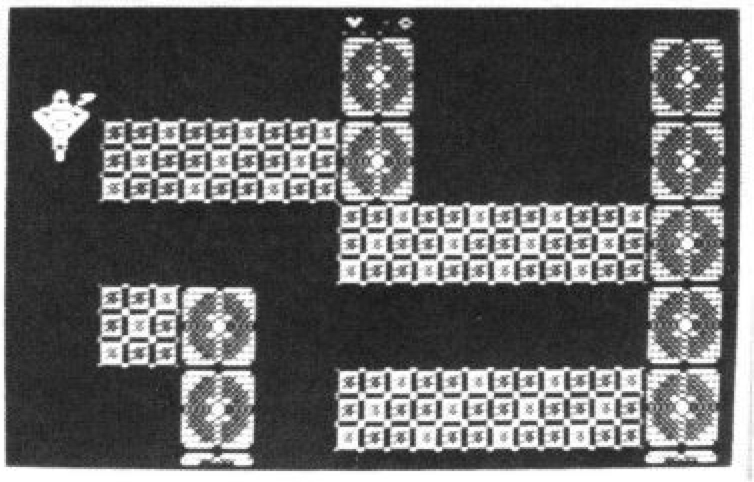
Fly off the left side of the screen and you reappear on the right.

Most curious of all is the way the succession of ships go down. They shudder as they go. I've never seen

Destructo is a really nice bloke. And I think he wouldn't be half as mean if somebody put him in a decent game for a change.

Bohdan Buciak

	Rating (1–10)
Graphics	4
Sound	4
Toughness	4
Endurance	2
Value	4
Overall	4



◀ Bulldog—worst of the British

JACKLE & WIDE

64/128
Bulldog
Price:£1.99

Dr Jackle has acquired an amazing new drink with 100 percent Nutra Sweet that makes your eyes pop out and gives you a two-minute beard that would make Ayatollah Khomeni think about taking up Christianity. It doesn't do much to improve your table manners either.

All of which puts the poor chap in a bit of a dilemma, becaust the effect seems to be permanent and he has no antidote. But Dr Piqued has an antidote, for it was he who invented the problematic potion. The trouble is Dr Jackle/Mr Wide and Dr Piqued are sworn enemies, which is just as well when you think about it, because if they weren't Dr Piqued would just say "Don't worry Jackle old chap, just gargle down some of this here antidote and you'll be right as rain in no time at all"; there'd be no story, no game and nothing to write about.

Quite understandably, Jackle does not want to wander around for the rest of his life looking like a cross between Richard Branson and Oliver Reed. So he goes in search of the antidote. The search begins in Hyde Park. This is a sort of two dimensional maze of trees and walls viewed from above. Dr Jackle travels by bicycle, because after about three minutes the screen goes black and you are told you have to run out of time. In the park there are various objects to collect and various puzzles to solve. These objects have some use — if you drop them in the right place things happen. If you drop the axe by a boulder you can get into the quarry, if you have the sea sickness pill you can avoid death by drowning and so on.

Meandering around Hyde Park on a bicycle is all well and good, but Dr Piqued's laboratory is hidden on one of the caverns deep below ground. To get to it you will have to go down all nine of them at one point or another. Going to the caverns has the advantage of stopping the clock so you won't run out of time.

Life in the caverns is very Jet Set Willyish. You can walk around, jump over things, get chased and attacked by unwholesome thingies which deplete your energy and kill you.

Unremarkable describes it pretty well, it's reminiscent of early C16 games, but with better graphics. I've seen other Bulldog stuff and tha'ts not up to much either. If you're after better quality cheapos stick to the Mainstream Mastertronic budget range.

Ken McMahon

	Rating (1–10)
Graphics	4
Sound	2
Toughness	5
Endurance	5
Value	5
Overall	4



CENTURIONS

COMMODORE 64/128
Price: £9.95

You've had the Transformers. You've had the Gobots. Neither were much good. Now "Power-x-treme" (Power x what?-Ed.) Prepare to meet the 'Centurions'. Puzzled? Well, let me explain, the Centurions are three men, Ace, Jake, and Max.

These men are no ordinary men, these men are shown on Get Fresh! Join me on another great Centurions adventure . . .

One day the Centurions were waiting eargerly for a visit from Zad, for he had prepared a lovely little batch of new weapons for them.

Zad arrived, well at least most of him did, as he had blown away one of his limbs whilst testing the new weapons. After telling him how sorry they were, and then carefully listening to the instructions on their new, and most powerful weapons, the Centurions wished him farewell. Ace decided to take a quick stroll over to the main computer to get a run down on his brand new tools when, all of a sudden the alarm sounded. There was a break in at the weapons centre. They knew Doc Terror had to be behind this and they knew what he was after. Why of course, the Tyrondichromate, a new chemical made to allow the process of nuclear fusion, but it had not been tested yet.

The game's set out over three very large levels. Choose either one, and whether or not you would like to play a friend. And before you start I don't want any moaning from Wingeville complaining that you can't choose Ace or Jake or which ever one you want to be. You can but it happens while playing the game. You see the main difference between being Ace, Jake, and Maxi is that each can only walk on one surface of the three; air, water, and land. You will need to walk on all three to win which is why there is a pad which enables you to change between Centurions. You can be any of the three Centurions you like, except when the other player is the one you wish to change to.

The object is to find the six keys scattered about each of the three levels. You will need these to get out of the rooms and in to the next building.

The nastys are no more than your average alien. Nothing special, just blobs shaped differently which you must shoot to kill with your dot-like bullets.

Certain weapons can harm you just as much as the enemy if you're not careful. One of them, known as the ring weapon, is the one that took off Zak's leg. 'C' to 'H are various weapons of diffrent fire powers. Grenade is the one I'm sure you all know what this does!

Where does the Tyron-Dichromate come in to all this? Well, as far as nuclear fusion is concerned it doesn't, but our acidic stomached Centurions, eat the stuff and get an energy boost.

I thoroughly enjoyed this game once I had got to grips with it. At first your mind does tend to wander to thoughts of Gauntlet, but underneath there is a big strategy element which can be originally tricky — but the real fun comes when you adopt a basic strategy and have a little sucess.

The graphics and sound are both fairly modest, but the title screen is absolutely spectacular and definitely one of the best I've seen in a long time. I would advise you to buy this unless you simply want a Gauntlet clone. This adds a little brain challenge to the original idea.

Ferdy Hamilton



The pad — will you be Ace, Jake or Max?

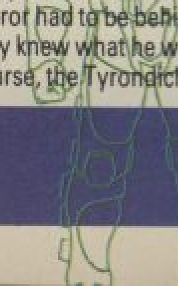




Centurions, Transformers in disguise!



Ferdy . . . or is it Max, heads for the lock.



Graphics	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Sound	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Toughness	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Endurance	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Value	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

7 Overall

rental companies, builders and other competing advertisers. Each one can display their latest rates and special offers. So if you want to compare the prices of several different firms, just tap a few keys to find the lowest quote. Electronic Yellow Pages already covers all of London, Guildford, Reading and Watford. To find out more about how this new service works, or if you have any difficulty gaining access, phone our Helpline on Reading (0734) 506259. And even if you don't win the competition, you'll still find that Electronic Yellow Pages offers many rewards.

HOW TO ENTER

First, you must programme your terminal to connect to EYP:
if you have a Videotex terminal with a Database Directory, simply add EYP and the appropriate telephone number below to the menu, as shown in the terminal handbook;
if you have a Teletype terminal, (e.g. a microcomputer) simply set up a profile for EYP using the relevant telephone number and technical settings. If you are not sure how to do this, ask your computer supplier.
To gain access, dial the number you've programmed and, once connected, you'll be asked for a user ID number. Simply enter the special competition ID shown below, and follow the instructions.

ACCESS NUMBERS

For Teletype 300/300
Dial: Reading (0734) 586255
Enter ID: 5005
For Teletype 1200/1200
Dial: Reading (0734) 597231
Enter ID: 5005
For Videotex 1200/75
Dial: Reading (0734) 585151
or go to Prestel page 3813
Enter ID: 5006
Like the whole EYP database, entering the competition is free.

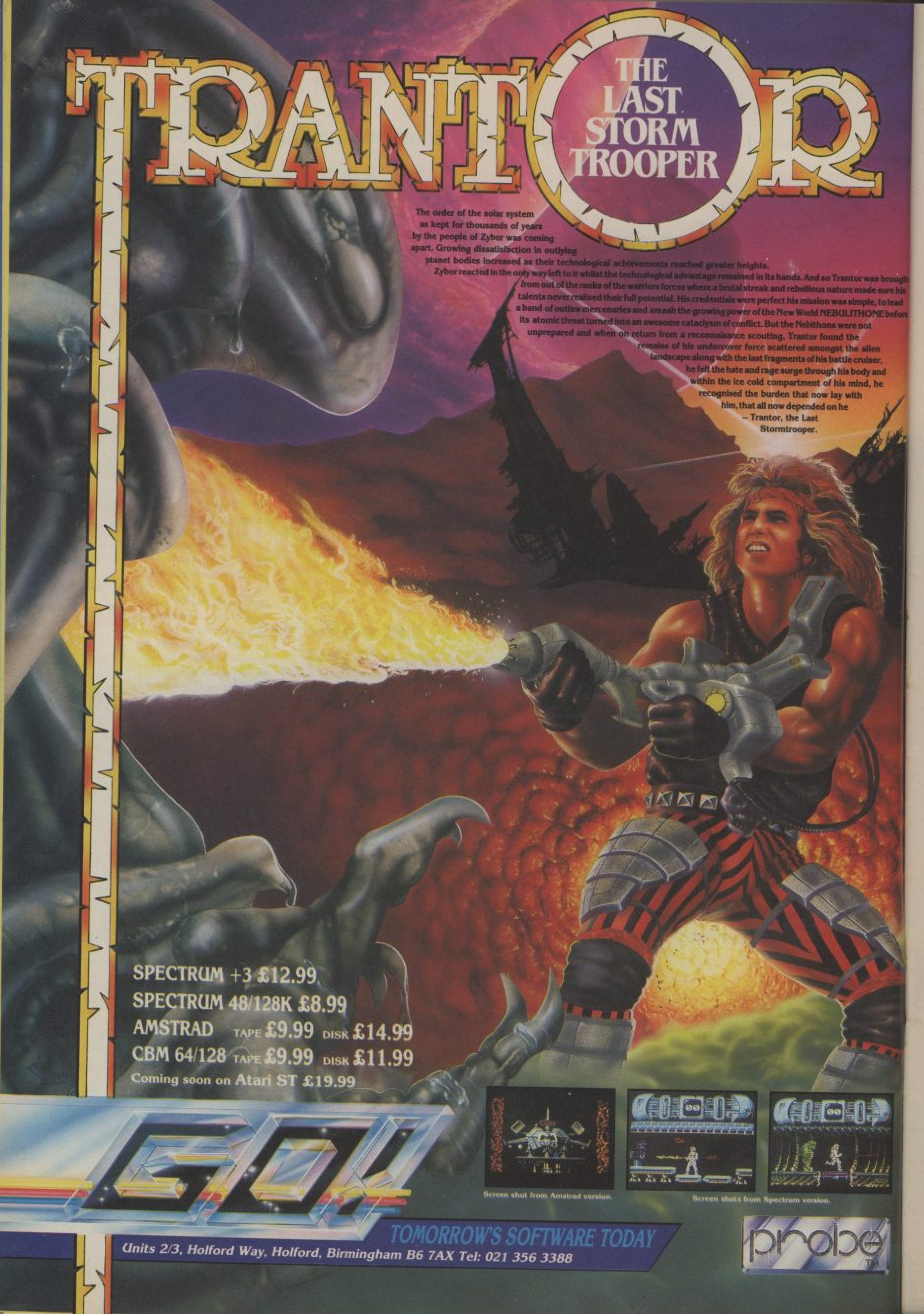
TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

Technical settings for EYP are:
7 data bits, 1 stop bit, even parity

PRIZES:

1st £250; 2nd £100; 3rd £50; 150 consolation prizes of £20.
The closing date for entries is 30th September 1987.





TRANTOR
THE LAST STORM TROOPER
The order of the solar system as kept for thousands of years by the people of Zybor was coming apart. Growing dissatisfaction in outlying planet bodies increased as their technological achievements reached greater heights. Zybor reacted in the only way left to it whilst the technological advantage remained in its hands. And so Trantor was brough from out of the ranks of the warriors forces where a brutal streak and rebellious nature made sure his talents never realised their full potential. His credentials were perfect his mission was simple, to lead a band of outlaw mercenaries and smash the growing power of the New World NEBULITHONE befor its atomic threat turned into an awesome cataclysm of conflict. But the Nebithons were not unprepared and when on return from a reconnaisance scouting, Trantor found the remains of his undercover force scattered amongst the alien landscape along with the last fragments of his battle cruiser, he felt the hate and rage surge through his body and within the ice cold compartment of his mind, he recognised the burden that now lay with him, that all now depended on he – Trantor, the Last Stormtrooper.
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Screen shot from Amstrad version.
Screen shots from Spectrum version.
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probe

PIRATES of the Barbary Coast

64/128 CASCADE **Price: £9.95/cass**



Could it be that Pirates are going to replace Ninjas as the new heroes of the computer game? Will we see staffs, shurikens and black pyjamas replaced by swords, parrots and wooden legs? Not if *Pirates Of The Barbary Coast* is anything to go by.

"Action", adventure and derring-do on the high seas" but Cascade's game is not all it's cracked up to be. Despite the very nice packaging and graphics *Pirates* is badly let down by slow and uninteresting gameplay.

The plot is full of the kind of cliches you'd expect. Whilst docked in Casablanca, your ship, The American Star, (the plot owes more to 20th Century Fox than 18th Century history) is attacked by 'Bloodthroat'.

Bloodthroat, in case you hadn't guessed, is the bloodthirsty pirate villain of the piece. He has captured your daughter, Katherine, and is holding her to ransom for 50,000 pieces of gold (seems rather a lot).

According to the map there are seven ports on the Barbary coast and you have to plod from one to the other in search of the poor unfortunate girl. You start out with 5,000 pieces of gold, some crew, enough food to keep them scurvy-free for a few days and a few odd supplies such as tobacco, wool and the like which you can trade.

Other useful odds and ends can be found lying around the ship. Fifteen cannons and balls-a-plenty to fill them with for example. So the idea is that you sail from port to port selling a bit of this, buying a bit of that, until you've got the necessary 50,000 to buy your beloved daughter's freedom (assuming she's not perfectly happy where she is, that is).

Alternatively you can load the old bucket with enough firepower to give a fleet of nuclear sumbarines a good run for its money and try and talk Bloodthroat out of it that way.

Whilst in port you are approached by a trader who asks you if you want to do a little business. This trader has a different name in every port from Tangier to Tripoli, but looks remarkably identical wherever you are. You can haggle over the price of goods, but if you push it too far he gets a bit shirty and refuses to trade. You can then try out the local store where, amongst other things, you can buy information. The news comes pretty expensive in these parts and its price doesn't always reflect its value. I paid well over the odds to discover that you get a cheap cup of tea in Tripoli.

In search of something more exciting I set sail. Fair enough, it was more exciting than being in port, but it wasn't exactly where's the toilet paper time. After staring at the waves for ten minutes I arrived at the next port.

I tried again. Better luck this time, I was attacked. Before you can fight back you must load the cannon. Using a pointer you point to the cannon you want to load and press fire. Then you point to the ball, cannon, brush, cannon and that's it! Provided you got them in the right order. If not it's here we go again.

This is supposed to be dead realistic, but having done it fifteen times I can tell you it' a pain in the bot. If you manage to get the cannons loaded you can set the elevation and fire at ship that crosses the horizon from left to right and fires at you. And if you hit it often enough you can board it and nick the booty or get more useful info from Captain Slog.

It doesn't actually sound too bad, does it? But there's one final factor that decided me against. Every time you decide to do something, like set sail, talk to the trader or go to the store; the old 1541 crawls into action, which, as we all know, means you might as well go and play half a dozen games of Monopoly while you're waiting.

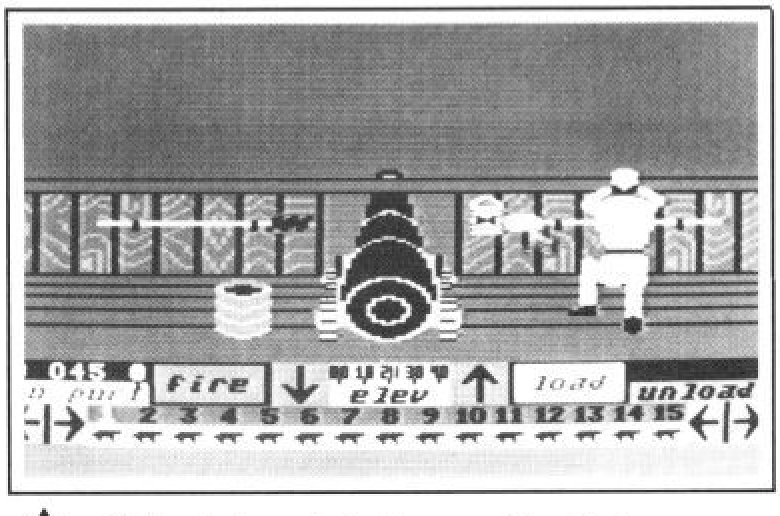
The sound is pretty mediocre as well. There's no sea as far as I could make out and incoming cannonballs let out a feeble whistle.

Pirates isn't dreadful, it's just rather, well, dull. Unless you're overly anxious to be on the high seas I'd turn to the Microprose *Pirates* review to see if it's any better.

Ken McMahon



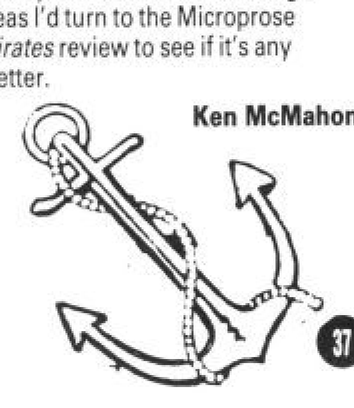
Cap'n Buciak prepares to come ashore.



All loaded up—but where are the pirates.

Graphics	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Sound	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Toughness	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Endurance	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Value	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

5 Overall



Black Magic



64/128
Datasoft/
US Gold
Price: £9.99/cass
£14.99/cass

Black Magic is one of those nice 'n' cute games that Americans love so much. They'll palm it off on Junior to stop him playing socially unsound stuff. Junior then throws it back and says "hey pop, gimme back my *Raid over Moscow*".

Sadly, *Black Magic* is just too cute for its own good — it's sweeter than the chocs themselves. Worse still, it's well and truly in the ladders and platforms mould, with a sprinkling of *Ghosts and Goblins* here and there.

Break out the cookies, the story goes like this. Anakar the magician (social paragon) had six eyes. Zahgrim the Red Warlock (social deviant) turns him to stone and scatters his eyes around the land of MariGold. You must find the eyes and replace them in the statue so that Zahgrim gets what's coming to him (is deposed).

Your journey takes you through six levels of the land, which is conveniently strewn with ladders. Also strewn around is food, in the shape of fruit and roast chickens, and spell scrolls. You must collect both whenever you can because you're constantly running out of food, and constantly running into predicaments that just cry out for a bit of hocum.

The collection of nasties includes flowers that throw frisbees, trolls that curse you unless you give them food, and assorted demons, bats, ghosts and water monsters. Needless to say, that lot are all bad for your health. They can be sorted out by firing arrows at them, which you pick up as you go.

Less nasty is a bird that ocassionally swoops down and picks you up. Sometimes it deposits you down in a reasonable spot and on others, right in the thick of it.

You start as an apprentice, with a choice of only two spells — Vanish and Blink. Releasing prisoners as you go increases your points total which eventually ups your status and the number of spells available to you. By the way, this isn't difficult, prisoners are released merely by walking past them.

A comprehensive set of information is displayed at the bottom of the screen: your health, food reserves, how many spells and arrows you have left, the level you're on, eyes collected and the number of points you've amassed. Keeping an eye on health, food, spells and arrows is pretty essential. Early demise is usually due to running out of food.

You also need to know just when to use spells to stay out of trouble. The vanish spell, for example, will protect you but won't let you pick anything up. Blink simply transports you to another part of the maze, into a good or a bad area.

Finally, messages are displayed in a window whenever something happens to you. The most annoying is, "Yum, yum, yum, that hit the spot", when you pick up some food.

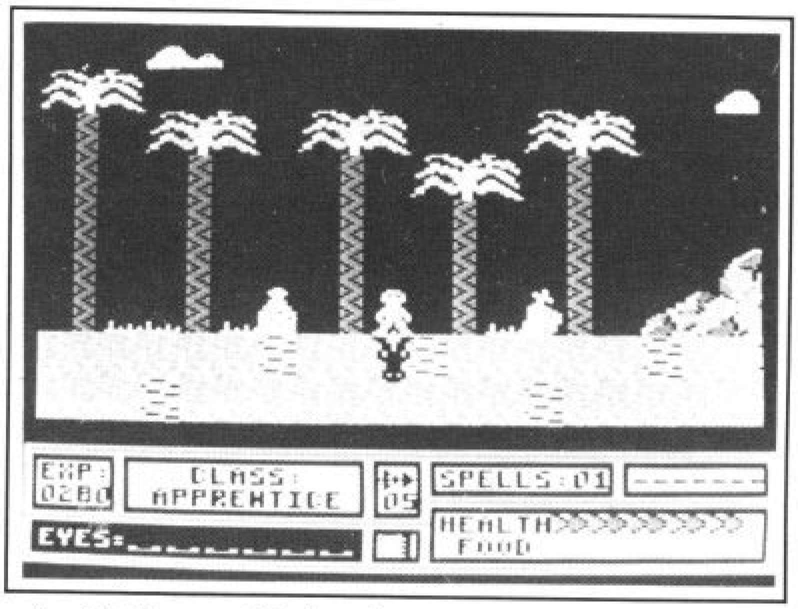
To its credit, Black Magic is a big game and offers a very large area to explore. Locations are signposted so you always know where you are. But there's nothing really special about the graphics, or the various nasties, nor is the gameplay particularly challenging.

There's nothing shoddy about Black Magic. It's well programmed and well designed. But however competitent the execution, the idea is as flat as Watneys on a warm day.

Bohdan Buciak



The game says it: "hit the spot". Bohdan says it's as flat as Watneys.



Sickly sweet Yanks oft with a chocolate box title.



Graphics	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Sound	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Toughness	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Endurance	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Value	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

6
Overall

SCARY MONSTERS

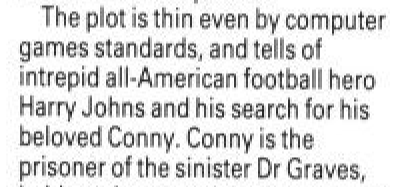


64/128
Odin/Firebird
Price: £7.95/cass £12.95/disk

This is a real Frankenstein's monster of a game — a peculiar creation cobbled together from bits and pieces, sometimes dramatic and sometimes pathetic, lurching about looking for an identity (*Wow! A metaphor! Ed.*).

Or to put it another way, it's a bit of a shambles in places.

The plot is thin even by computer games standards, and tells of intrepid all-American football hero Harry Johns and his search for his beloved Conny. Conny is the prisoner of the sinister Dr Graves, held captive on an island populated by the horrific mistakes of the good doctor's pioneering experiments in genetics.



These unfortunate creations bear uncanny resemblances to famous stars of Hollywood horror flicks — Dracula, Frankenstein's monster, the Mummy, the Wolfman, a zombie and a witch. Harry's got to kill the lot before he can once again enjoy Conny's ample charms.

None of this prepares you for the horrific beginning to the game: a map of the island, dotted with triangular trees and wobbly contours, and in the middle of all this, a little matchstick man. It's about as chilling and sinister as a geography lesson.

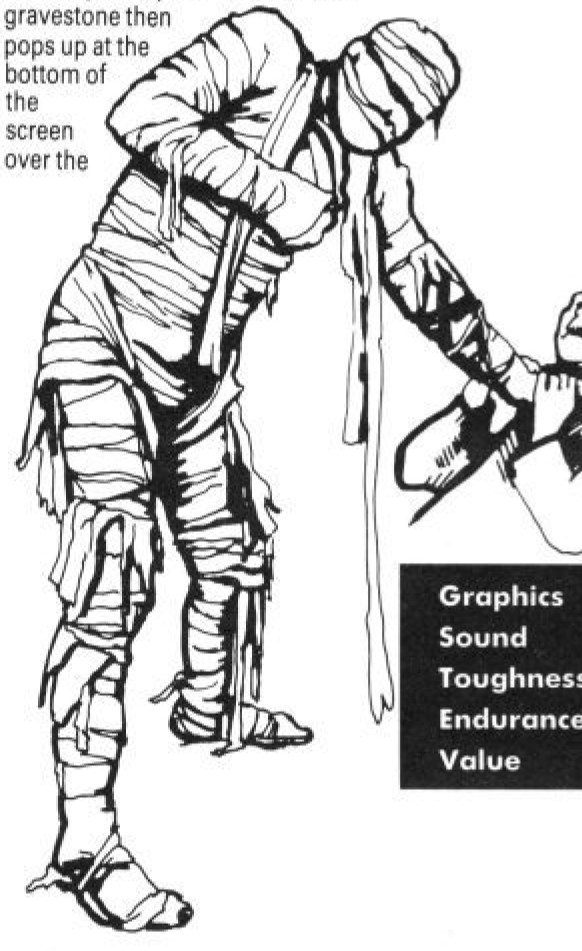
The little matchstick man is Harry, and as he sets off across the island, his little matchstick arms flap up and down as he blunders into the conifers and bounces off the coastline, heading for the nearest building.

But once inside, graphics and gameplay improve dramatically. The rooms are crammed with balustrades and busts, vases, coffins and furniture, and though these are made from graphic stock items (the busts are the same in all buildings), they're sufficiently varied to make each location quite different.

Harry has now grown to a good half-inch high, fleshed out with muscles and sweatshirt, and as he tiptoes across the room, swarms of witches and phantoms start criss-crossing the screen at every level.

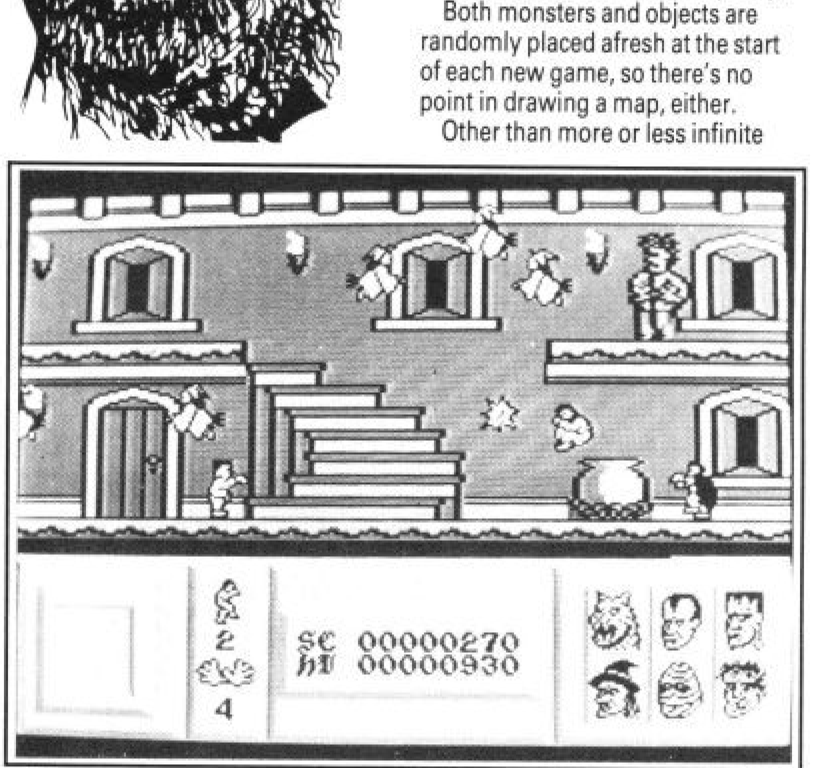
Harry might be tempted at first to try and leap over the ghosts and monsters, but if he tries this he'll be bounced around the screen like a pinball, his energy sapped and his firepower gone. The secret is for Harry to wade into the fray zapping away continually, cutting a swathe through the enemy. Don't worry about ammo — Harry can keep firing endlessly — or at least until he gets bounced again.

Somewhere in the building, up a flight of stairs or maybe hiding behind a pile of crates, you might find the unmoving figure of Dracula or one of the other five monsters. Now all you've got to do is lead Harry to the right object which will slay the creature — in Dracula's case this will be a hammer and stake. But it's rare that both a monster *and* the means of its destruction will be found together in the same building, so Harry's got to scamper around the island once more, searching the other dwellings (all ghost-infested) until he picks up the tackle. A little gravestone then pops up at the bottom of the screen over the appropriate icon, and your score gets boosted by 10,000 points.

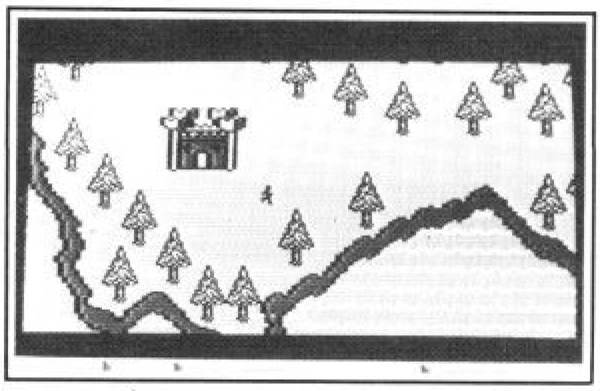


And then it's off to find the next monster and the correct weaponry.

Both monsters and objects are randomly placed afresh at the start of each new game, so there's no point in drawing a map, either.



Arcade fun inside the ghoul-filled mansions . . .



. . . but matchstick-man tedium in between.

Other than more or less infinite firepower, Harry's also got the exorcist's equivalent of a Smart bomb, to be used sparingly. One wave of his hands and the screen magically clears of all spirits for a second or two. This proves useful when things get sticky.

But just when things get going and you're enjoying yourself, Harry's got to search for the next building and once more you're looking at pictures of matchstick men in what must be one of the most tedious, time-consuming and generally duff game sequences ever.

Bill Scolding

Graphics	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Sound	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Toughness	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Endurance	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Value	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

7 Overall



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C.U. Screen Star

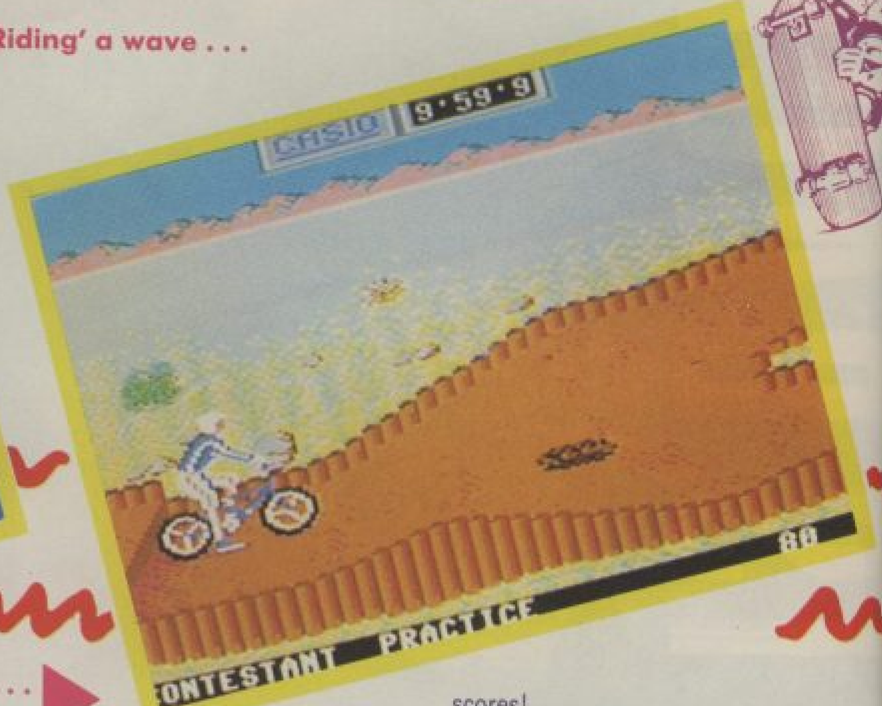
CALIFORNIA GAMES

Epyx

Price:
£9.99/cass
£14.99/disk



Riding' a wave . . .



Bouncin' a bike . . .

Many, many people in this world are addicted to something or other. The sadder cases are of drugs, the milder ones of cigarettes and sweets. I once regarded myself as a person of willpower but now even I have submitted to a craving. I can't go for an hour without playing this wretched piece of software!

Now I've calmed down a little I'll begin to tell just what my ranting and raving is all about. The games (as you might notice) are set in California (you know, that place on the west coast of America where all they ever seem to say is 'radical') and the sports in it are not straight-forward Olympic types as in previous Epyx games. The sports are a collection of all the obscure wild crazes sweeping the beaches of California.

There are six events set out in the style of the previous Epyx offerings. The menu screen gives you the option to: play all events; play one event; play some events; or practice one event. You can play with one or two joysticks and up to eight players can join in the fun. Or you can view the high score table and look at my immense high scores!

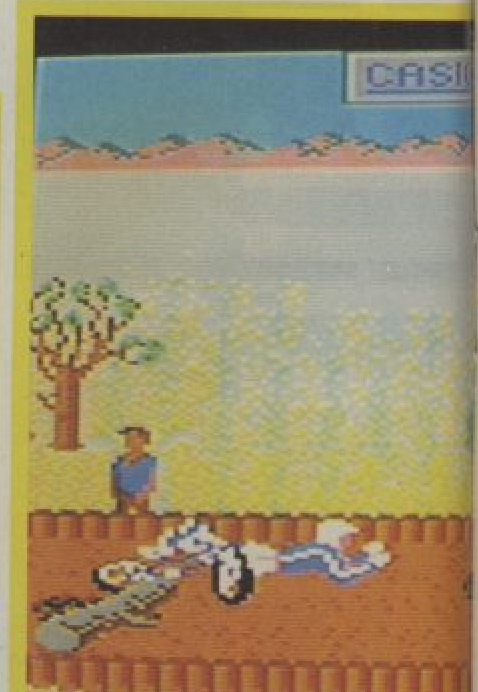
Epyx have also revolutionised games in a capitalistic sort of way, and included sponsors such as Casio. Maybe they could've dropped the price a little due to this. Oh well, on to the events. . . .

HALF PIPE: Half pipe is a bowl-shaped rink on which all self-respecting skate-boarders practice

Beware — wild ice creams about . . .



C.U. Screen Star



And watch out for those stray logs . . .

their aerial and kick turns. The pipe looks as its name describes, like a pipe sawn in half, the only difference being that it is about 20 feet high. The skater must skate up and down the sides until he thinks he has gathered enough speed to go for one of those fancy turns. Epyx have included three different turns which can be done, and the skater has three lives and a minute and a half to do this in — this event finds Epyx not even slightly dropping standards on their usual wonderful graphics, and faultlessly smooth animation.

FOOTBAG: This obscure sport is commonly known over 'ere as "hacky-sacking". The object is for the player to keep up the hacky-sack or, if you prefer, footbag using just his feet, legs and head. The footbag is a golf ball-sized soft leather ball-type-thing, and is fairly tricky to keep going in real life. Although manipulating the computer is sightly easier, the tricky part is pulling off the fancy moves such as the Doda, or the Axle Foley, as simply keeping the bag up will not get nearly enough points to hope for a medal when you are up against players of my standard *(i.e. Extremely useless— Ed.).*

SURFING: There are times when I seriously wish that this event just wasn't on the game, but this is only because the Ed won't let us listen to anything else but his Beach Boys collection (extensive!) and he keeps singing 'Surfin' U.S.A.' in a kind of would-be soprano. The event itself, however is pure magic. The feeling of getting on the computerised board and hitting a few curls is just radical. The object is just to surf in the most dangerous and exciting manner possible for the duration of ninety seconds. You are allowed four crashes, which should be used if you hope to be awarded highly and get close to the tube.

SKATING: No, don't worry, it's not of the icy, boring variety as we saw in Winter Games. This time it's of the hot California boardwalk, rolling variety. The object is to guide your bikini-clad, pouting redhead along the troublesome boardwalk, dodging monstrous obstacles such as melting ice-creams and cracks in the wood. There are also a couple of spins which you can pull off for extra points. This event is one of those in which Epyx show their amazing skill of simulating actual control by carfully deciding how the user must move the joystick for total success instead of doing as others and making it a left-right waggle job.

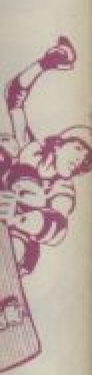
BMX: Don't one of you begin to tell me you don't know this sport inside out. Everyone, yes I mean everyone, has at one point been into BMX. Even the Ed. used to come in to work on a Mongoose. Anyway the object is for you to burn across a BMX course, negotiating the ramp and twigs and bumps in the course, and if possible getting in a couple of stunts on the way.

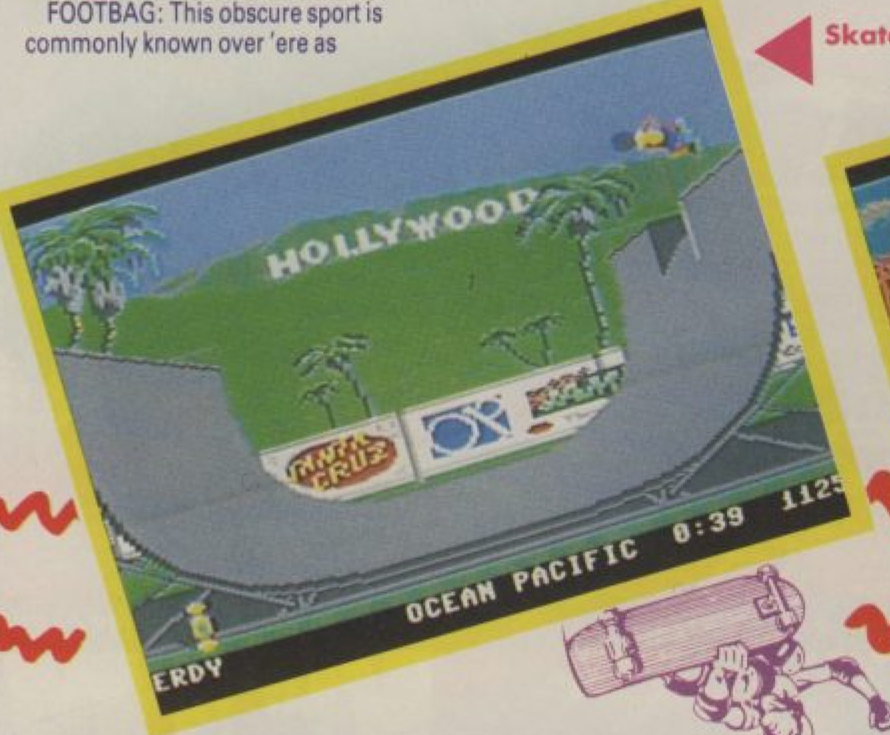
FLYING DISC: Two extremely butch, Martina Navratilova-lookalikes are playing frisbee in the park. You must first control the thrower and ensure that her speed and angle are correct, then you must manipulate the catcher so that she can either dive, reach above her head of just simply run to catch the frisbee. In the words of the immortal Run DMC "It's tricky!"

Looking at the screen shots and reading my description you might think 'great, this is as good as the rest of the Epyx series'. Don't. Think this instead. *California Games* is the best of the 'games' series, the graphics are a new first not only for Epyx but for the 64. The sound is amazing too and features the 60's classic 'Louie, Louie'. But the greatest virtue of the game is its ease of use and playability.

The teeny-weeny groans I do have are that the cassette version is an oh-so painful multi-load. Still, this can't be helped. Many software houses aim to reach perfection: Epyx are far and away the closest.

Ferdy Hamilton



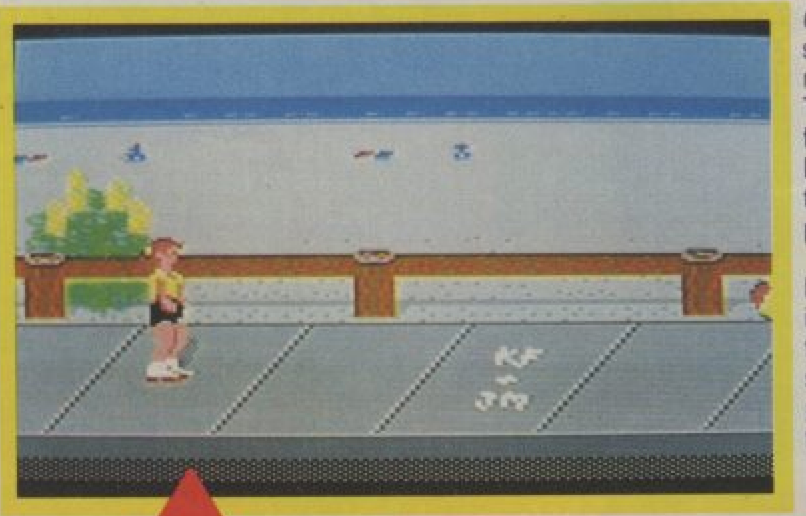


Skate or die, man . . .



Keep that footbag flyin' . . .





"I wish they all could be California Games . . ."

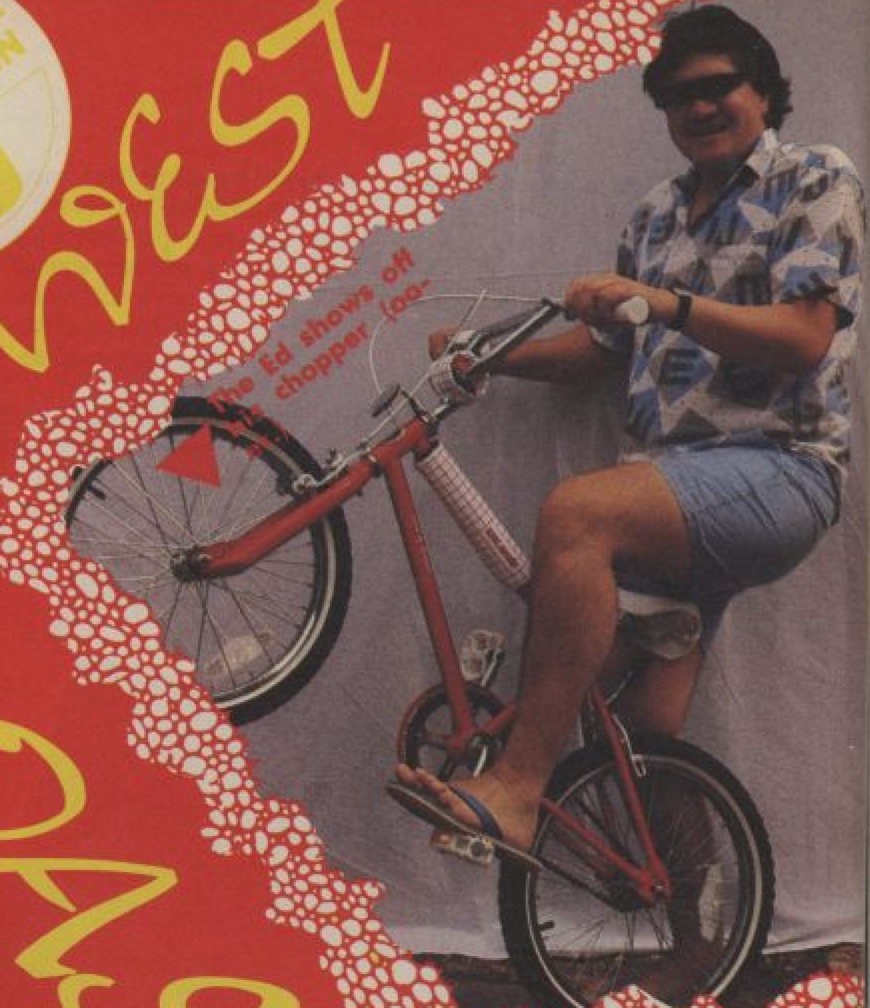
C.U. Screen Star

Graphics	
Sound	
Toughness	
Endurance	
Value	
9 Overall	

WEST COAST Weird-Out



CU Roller Queen (and ad exec) Sian Jones shows how not to do it.



The Ed shows off ... chopper (aa-



Hotshot ... hangs ten.

WIN CALIFORNIA GAMES KIT

It was, like, totally awesome — I was, like grossing out on *California Games* when maaan, this like cool thought hits me. Maybe those dudes would like to win all the kit featured in the game. Wow. what a, like, baad idea. Just, like, well think about it — a free surf board, BMX bike, roller skates, skateboard, frisbee, and hacky sack all as demo'd by the CU team in the pix. Maan you could be bitchin in that gear.

It's easy to win, too. All you have to do is write in the name of the sport beside the jargon word below.

Then runners-up get Ocean Pacific T-shirts and copies of the game, whilst another thirty runners-up get copies of the game. How totally generous.

Each of the words refers to one of the sports featured in California Games.

1 Bunny Hop
2 Hang Ten
3 Stoked Out
4 Freewheelin
5 Backheel Flip
6 Skimback

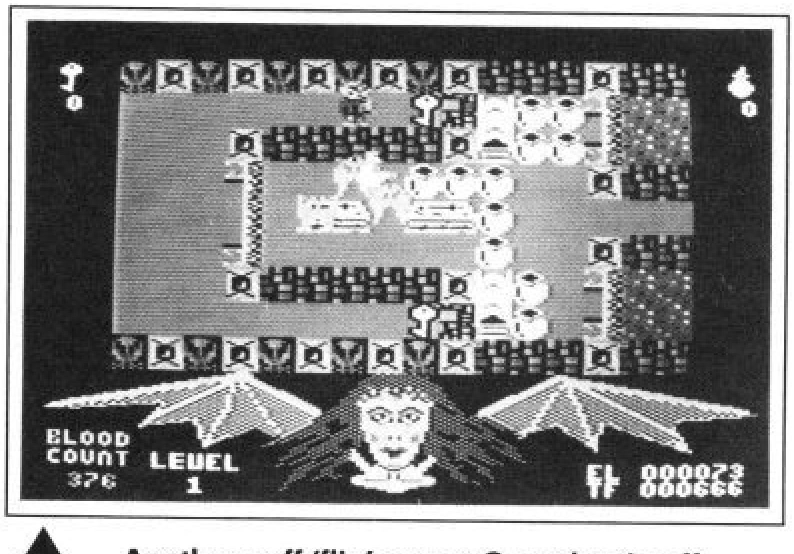
Entries must reach CU on a postcard by September 26. Send to Bitchin Bad Compo, Commodore User, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU.



...ach bum Kelly ...d ... the ad ...an Wierd out.



Piranha Software
Commodore 64/128
Price:
£7.95/cass
£13.95/disk



▲ **Another naff 'flip' screen Gauntlet rip off.**

The Astonishing Adventures of Mr Weems and the SHE VAMPIRES

Piranha have done a good job of not letting on that this game is a *Gauntlett* rip-off. They've given it one of those twee gut-wrenching titles and they've somehow omitted to feature any giveaway screenshots on the cassette inlay.

Add to that the drawing of women with Page Three cleavages on the inlay card, and you've got a pretty good cover-up job. But not good enough for CU's Clonewatch UK department — now over to Sue Cook and Inspector Knacker.

Piranha are trying, and failing dismally, to spoof the honoured *Gauntlet* tradition. Instead of mythical heros we get Mr Weems, a failed bespectacled accountant who's launched into a new career as a vampire hunter. Instead of *Gauntlet's* zapper spells, wimpy Mr Weems is armed with a gun that shoots bits of garlic at the blood-sucking nasties. None of this is very funny — I've never yet chuckled over a piece of garlic.

On a more technical note, Mr Weems has no companion to help him though the various mazes. This element of teamwork is essential, as we all know, to any *Gauntlet*-type game.

For what it's worth, the game features six levels of a Mansion through which Mr Weems must progress, shooting bloodsucking nasties, Frankenstein-like monsters and She Vampires. The aim is to make it to the sixth level, where you find the Great She Vampire in her penthouse suite. Kill the GSV and escape from the Mansion and you'll have done a good day's work.

Apart from picking up keys (to open doors) blood bottles (to replenish you blood supply) and garlic bombs (they zap all the aliens in the immediate vicinity), there's one object that must be found and picked up per level. Without all five-stake, mallet, piece of mega-garlic, mirror and crucifix — you won't be able to kill the GSV.

The screen gives a constant display of your blood-count and how many keys and garlic bombs you're carrying. Your blood level decreases rapidly as you come into contact with bloodsucking bats, so blood bottles must constantly be picked up. Once you're out of blood it's back to the title screen.

Garlic bombs clear the screen (not the whole level) of nasties and only then can you shoot and disable the coffins that generate them. As soon as you move off that particular screen the bomb loses its effect so it's best to use them judiciously.

There's also a garlic pill you can use to give yourself a short period of immunity. Nastiest of the nasties are the She Vampires who, if they bump into you, divest you of what you were carrying at the time. It takes a lot of shots to despatch them. The shots, by the way, look like Hula Hoops. I've never laughed at Hula Hoops either.

Although graphics are reasonable and up to the standards you'd expect, there's nothing special or different about them. You get the usual overhead view, and the usual manic swarms of nasties that appear out of what look like medieval cooking pots.

In mitigation, levels are large and complex, scrolling both up and down, and sideways. Scrolling, though, is not smooth. It jumps from screen to screen. And annoyingly, when you return to a previous screen, you find all the cooking pots and nasties have reappeared. Action is as fast and furious as you'd expect but without the teamwork element to add interest, it all becomes very futile. That sums up the game really.

Bill Scolding

Mr Weems picks up a gold pot — but where are the She Vampires. ▼



Mr Weems glasses steam up as a vampire flashes at him. ▼



Graphics	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Sound	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Toughness	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Endurance	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Value	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

5 Overall

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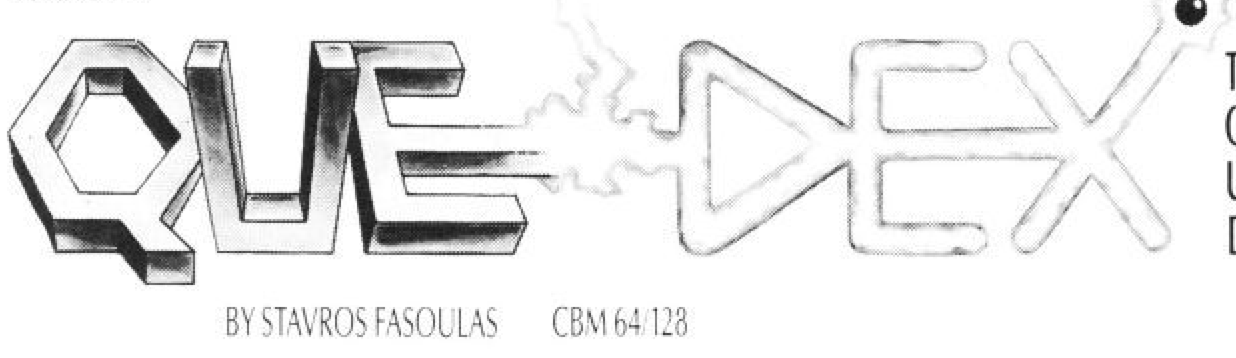
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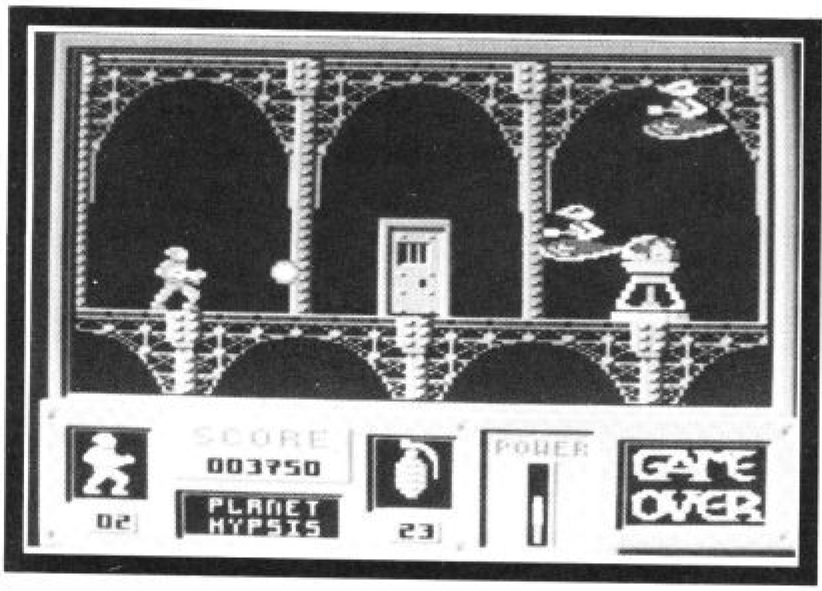
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SOON...

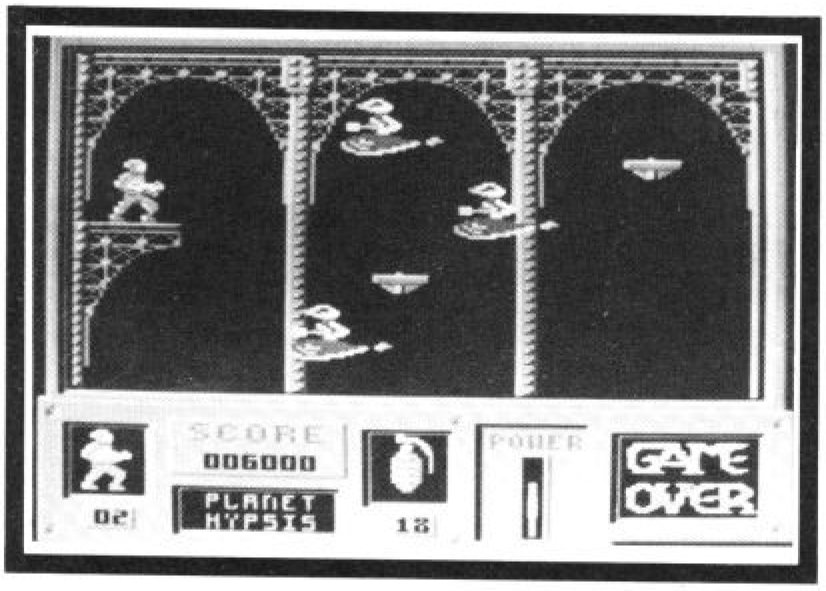


THE
QUEST FOR
ULTIMATE
DEXTERITY

BY STAVROS FASOULAS CBM 64/128

THALAMUS





GAME OVER

64/128
Imagine
Price: £8.95/Tape £12.95/Disk

The words 'game over' are probably one of the universally understood phrases in the game world. Why this game is called "Game Over" escapes me. I've read and re-read the press hype, the instructions and the back of the inlay, but, to no avail. Enough of this, let's insert 20 pence and carry on with the review.

So we grasp the joystick and break down the game. Ahh, you can "Pow Up" for better weapons, obtain the odd force field, or a lethal mine. It sounds very arcady to me. Although unlike most arcade games where you don't have a plot and have to work out what the green button does, you are informed of this in the instructions.

In an amazingly far-away galaxy, there is a beautiful and wicked woman. Also very accomplished, as she, with the aid of Lieutenant Arkos, has conquered five confederations of planets. Aided by her countless army of Terminators she was almost unstoppable. Then the intelligence of Lieutenant Arkos developed in such a way that he finally left the Queen's service to fight with the rebels. Arkos is the only one who knows the true combat abilities of the Queen's

◀ **There's a gun . . . but where's the nipple?**

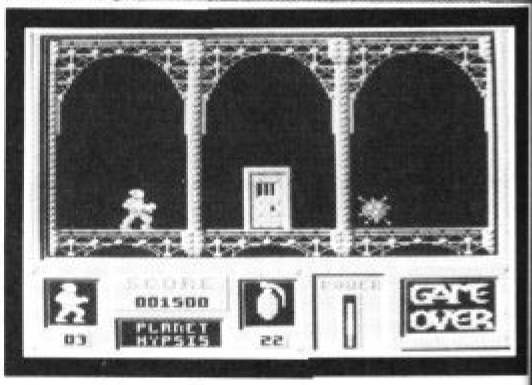
Terminators. So he is the only one able to destroy the Queen's reign. Hmm, not the Queen herself. Could this game be sequelled?

There are two phases to this game, each one on a separate planet. Hypsis and Sckunn. Although they sound like diseases to me, I have reliable information (Press Hype) that the first planet is a

◀ **Why all the Badgers in C5's?**

computerised prison, while the second is the imperial place. So off we set armed with only a laser and small supply of grenades to battle our way through 20 screens of unimaginable terror. Where we have to face such abominations as Guardian Robots (Ants in canoes), Green monsters (Small snot's), Laser Shooters (Daleks with no noses), Giant Orko (Big snot), and last but by no means least the Giant Robot (Unstoppable lanky person). So have we cleared that level yet? Good. Now it's time to catch Sckunn.

O.K., now we're in a nice bit of



▲ ***Game Over* and don't you just wish it was!**

jungle on our way to the Queen's palace. What you will encounter in this world are: Kaikas (Floatingus-Freisers (Who Knowus and Who really Caresus), Laser Shooter (Ouchus There Goesus Another lifeus), Giant Guardian (Oh F***us!).

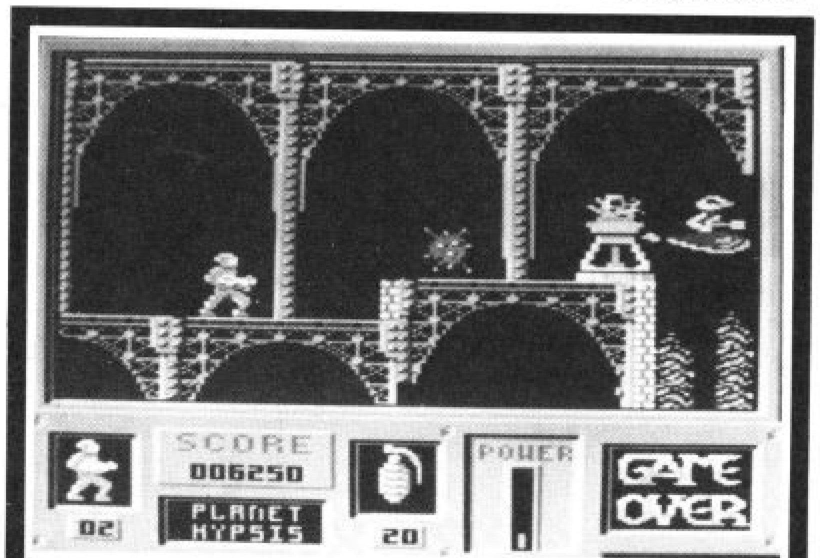
Thus concludes another flop from Imagine. The instructions portray the game in a way that makes it sound really good, and there's also the clever bit of advertising with the Queen exposing her nipple (subsequently covered up — Ed.).

The sounds are good (for a laugh), so are the graphics (for an even bigger laugh). The game's sort of a flip screen Ghosts and Goblins except it's set about a milenia or three in the future.

Well, there goes my last life, and I wonder to myself whether it's worth the effort for another go, let alone the asking price for the game. I think I'll go and do something more interesting with my life, like watch Ulysses 31, yeah, it might help me to forget what I've just attempted to play.

Mark Patterson

▼ **Shoot that spiky sucker.**



Graphics	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Sound	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Toughness	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Endurance	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Value	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

3
Overall


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Enlightenment— Druid II



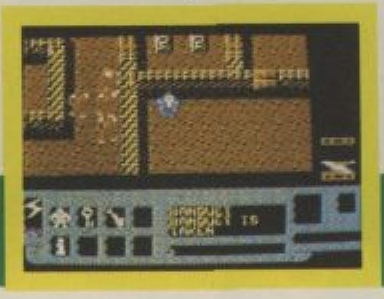
Hasrinaxx and his trusty Golem cross the bridge.

Firebird
Price: £9.95/cass



A wooden cross marks the spot — but whose grave?

C.U. Screen Star



Druid is back with a bang. This sequel offers a huge improvement on the original *Gauntlet* clone. Remember the original seven spells — how brilliant they were — the Golem, the Fire Spell, the Invisibility Spell — well now get this — *Druid II* features no less than 25 spells.

I won't attempt to list them all — save to say that several of them are totally new like *Recharge*, *Armour* and *Teleport* — all pretty self explanatory but pretty special t'boot.

The background graphics are even sharper and more detailed than *Druid I* — which in turn were better than the graphics in any of the

Gauntlet clones and, dare I say, the official version from US Gold.

The reason for the return of the cloaked hero — once described by a very important Firebird person as looking like a 'blue Santa' (draw your own conclusions) is all due to the evil Mage. Apparently this so and so has turned the once peaceful land of Belorn into a hell and its inhabitants into the living, walking dead.

Only you, the wizard Hasrinaxx can right this wrong.

Your task is to journey the ten lands of Belorn and destroy all the demons by firing at them constantly and casting *Deathlight* or *Deathland* spells.

When one of these demons starts to die its colour will start to change and a few more shots should finish it off — but be careful to dodge its continuous stream of fireballs.

Mapping is essential in this version as it was in the original. Watch CU's Play to Win column for help here — though I must say I am thoroughly enjoying mapping it all by myself.

This is an excellent game — certainly one of the best arcade adventures I've played. It is a timely reminder of the fact that all good designers borrow each other's ideas and then improve on them.

That is how computer games have improved over the last few years anyway, as far as I can see. *The Enlightenment — Druid II* (I think Firebird have been watching too much Rambo) points the way in which The Gauntlet type of game can develop.

What makes it special is the increased sophistication of the challenge added by all of the extra spells — whilst retaining the essential explore and blast nature of the coin-op game on which *Druid* has been based.

The game comes with a thorough instruction booklet — listing all of the new spells and telling the story of Hasrinaxx the Druid. A spellbindingly excellent game and — from a company that also markets cheapos — a reminder of the home truth — "you get what you pay for".

C.U. Screen Star

I, for one, would have no hesitation over handing out a tenner for this game.

Eugene Lacey

Graphics	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Sound	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Toughness	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Endurance	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Value	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

8 Overall

Improved graphics on the backdrops.



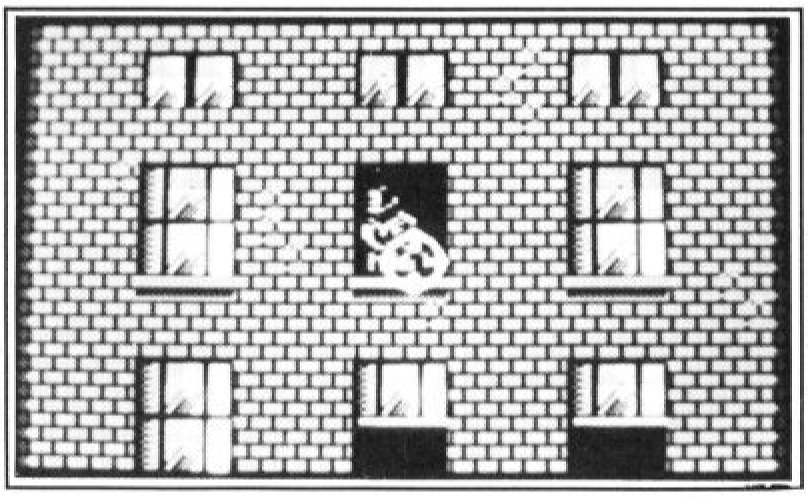
Waste them spiders quickish.





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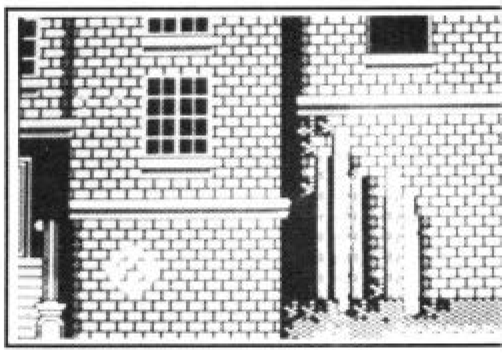


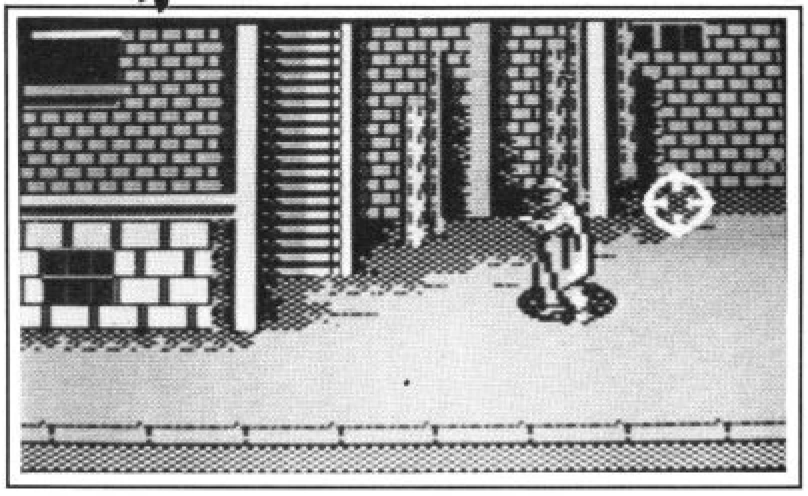
Take out the punk in the middle window.

64/128
Infogrames
Price: £9.99/cass
£14.95/disk

PROHIBITION

Waste that fink top right.





Liquidate that flasher.

Great, one of those Infograme whodunnit strategy games. Break out the six pack and the family size Cheezy Munchees. Hang on, what's this? No wacky murder to solve? No clue hunting to do? What a bummer.

Prohibition is Infogrames' first outright shoot 'em up. Why they should stray from the path that's brought them acclaim, I just don't know. Probably because the shoot 'em up merchants are making more money.

The blurb goes something like this. The police have hired you to eliminate New York's criminal gangs because they can no longer cope with the crime rate — too busy watching Hill Street Blues. So you grab your trusty Tommy (not Tommy of Tips fame) gun and make holes in as many pork pie hats as you can.

In reality, the game is even less of an exciting prospect. In front of you is a street of buildings with lots of windows. The aforementioned pork pie hats appear in them at intervals. So what do you do? Well, you simply shoot at them — no more, no less. It all has a more than passing resemblance to the rather dated coin-op *Streetfight*.

Shooting the villains is not as easy as it sounds. For a start, since you're using a machine gun, your gunsight jerks all over the place, thus making accuracy difficult. Employing what's known as the Rambo technique simply pebbledashes walls, leaving the villains totally unscathed.

You have five seconds to find the villain and fill him fulla holes before he blasts back. In this you're aided by an on-screen direction arrow and a countdown box. A few more seconds can be gained by pressing the spacebar — but you can't do that too often. Get blasted and you lose a life — I think. I say "I think" because there's no display of lives left, or ammo left, or strength left, or anything left. You simply carry on until the title screen pops up.

Anyway, so you carry on wasting mobsters. Predictably, villains get more difficult to hit. Some of them need a bucketful of bullets before they'll go down, whilst others crouch low just above a window ledge.

As you progress, you'll find villains in more unusual spots; one pops up from behind a wall, whilst another one makes a pretty good job of looking like a fire escape. When you've finished off all the villains in the street scene, you move into the building itself. I've never got this far, but I assume the strategy remains more or less the same.

I'm told that the Spectrum and Amstrad versions feature innocent victims and bystanders. These don't seem to have been implemented on the 64. Pity, shooting a few pedestrians might have been more fun than plugging mobsters.

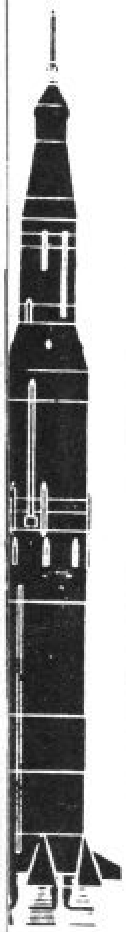
Prohibition sets out to be a test of joystick rather than greymatter prowess. And when it's achieved this aim is questionable. It seems to me that no matter how well you line-up your target, hitting it is something arbitrary. This is annoying and doesn't inspire you with confidence to try harder next time, especially since the villains always appear in the same sequence. How boring can you get?

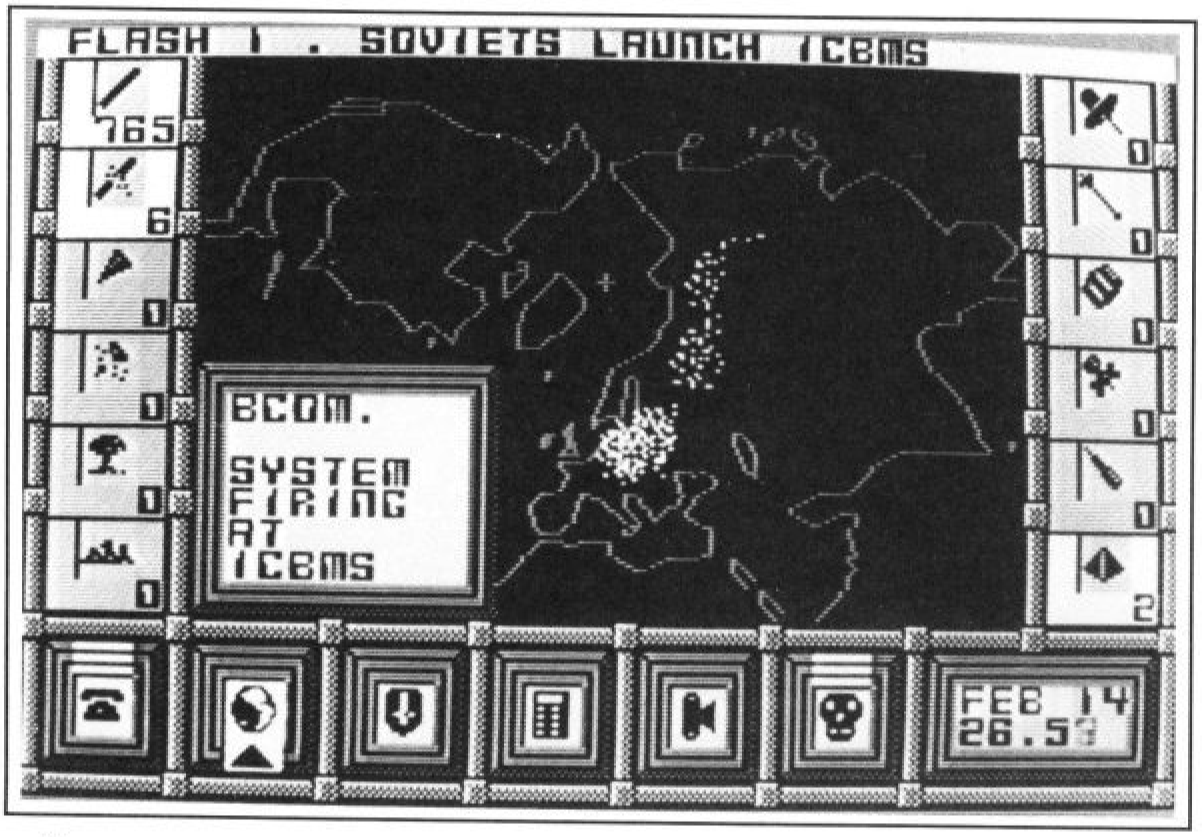
In mitigation, graphics are well up to Infogrames' standards and there's a reasonable tune that plays throughout. But none of this compensates for a game that's totally lacking in depth or sustained interest. We expect much more for the money — like a good murder.

Bohdan Buciak

Category	Rating (1–10 scale)
Graphics	7
Sound	7
Toughness	8
Endurance	4
Value	3
Overall	**4**







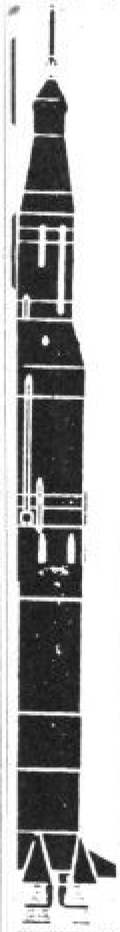
A cluster of Soviet nukes approach the UK.

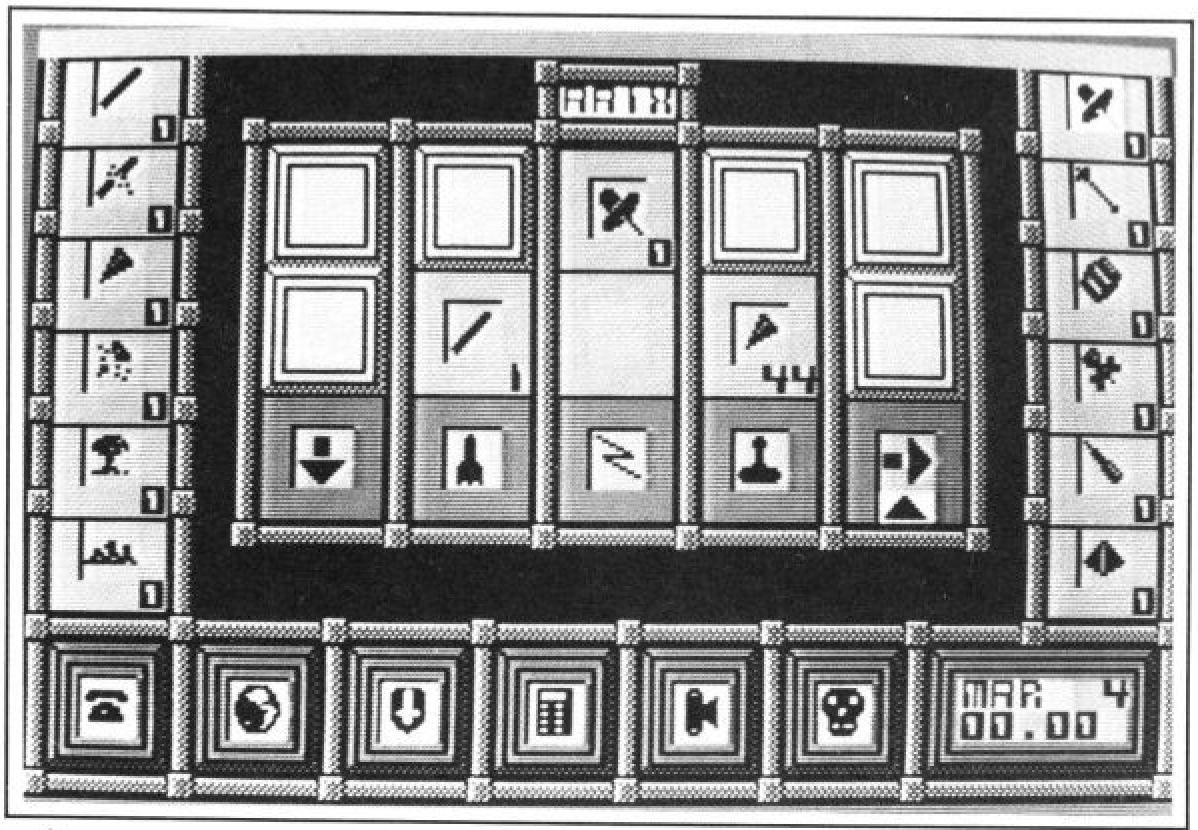
Activision 64/128 Price: £9.99 cass £14.99 disk

SDI or, if you prefer, Star Wars, is, as you all must know, a fairly controversial defence policy. In *High Frontier* you are the project leader who must plan staff and resources to construct an effective defence system as the world teeters on the brink of nuclear war.

The game is icon controlled and is played through a series of screens that represent the research and development, espionage, SDI command, threat and world displays. As the President gives you funds and manpower you can assign them to develop any of the eight possible weapon systems. For each stage of a system's research, development and hopeful deployment you need to meet the man and dollar costs represented by bars on the screen. Some weapons and some stages take more resources than others so it's inevitable that you won't be able to develop all the systems at once.

HIGH FRONTIER

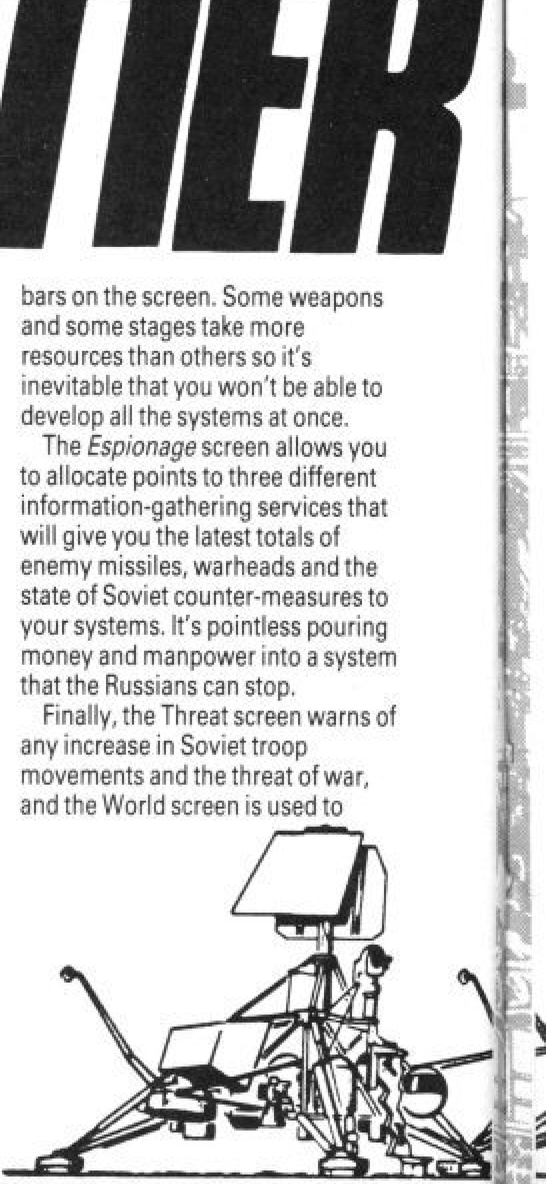


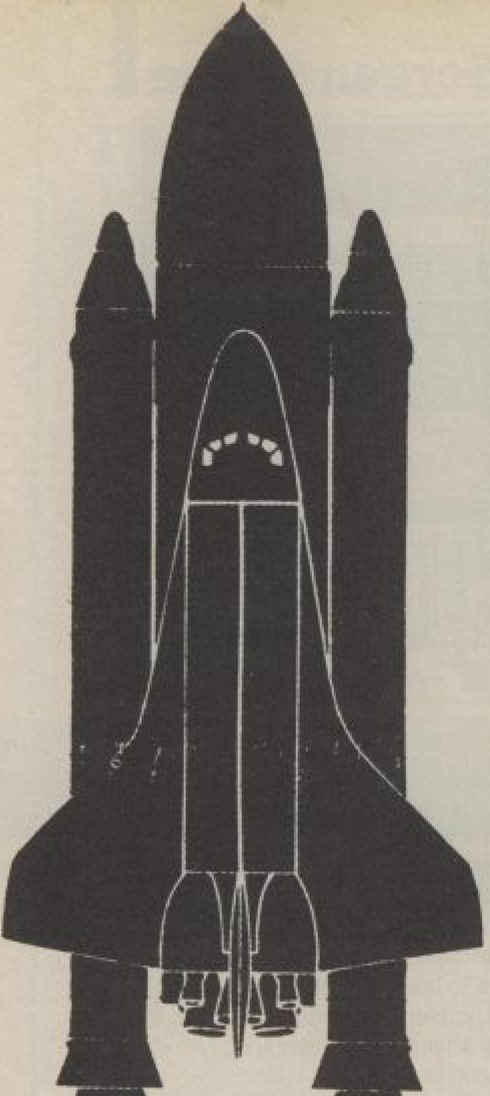


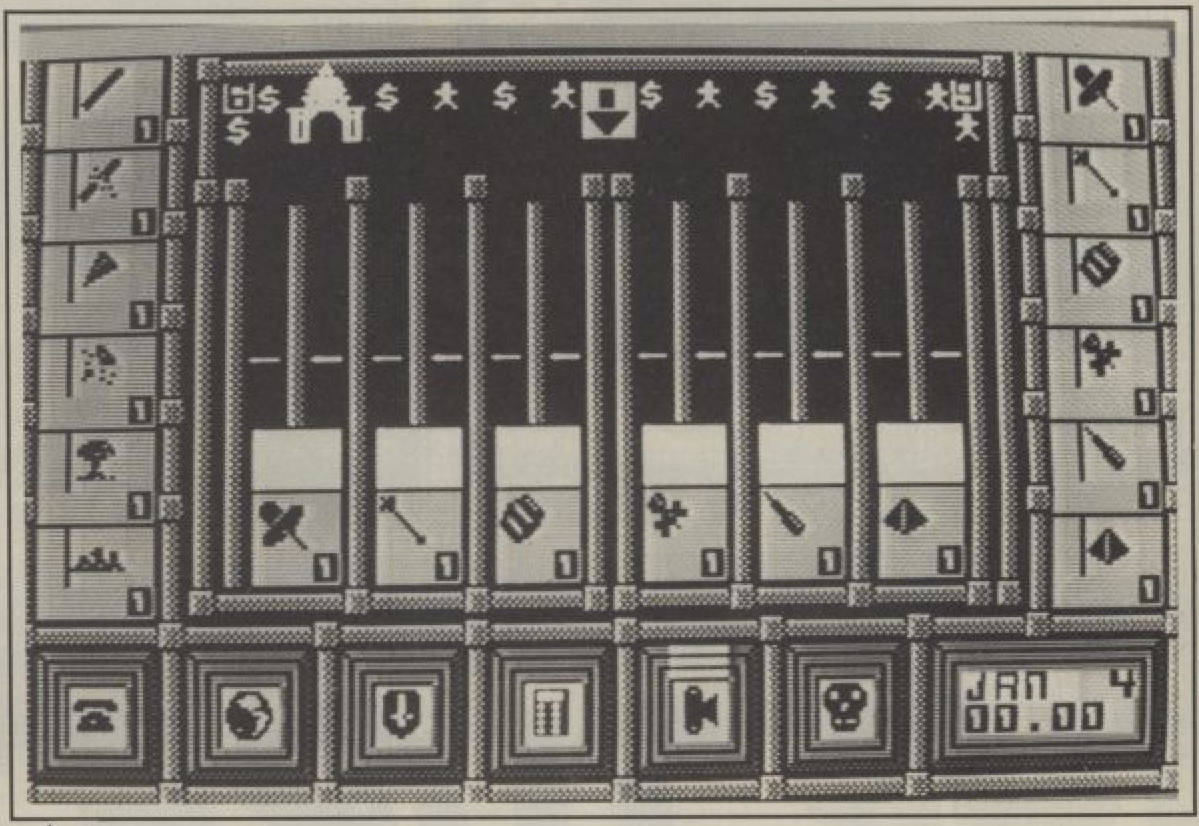
High Frontier — a totally icon driven strategy game.

The *Espionage* screen allows you to allocate points to three different information-gathering services that will give you the latest totals of enemy missiles, warheads and the state of Soviet counter-measures to your systems. It's pointless pouring money and manpower into a system that the Russians can stop.

Finally, the Threat screen warns of any increase in Soviet troop movements and the threat of war, and the World screen is used to







The arms balance represented graphically.

show the passage of time until one of the icons flash to show an injection of funds, research breakthrough or Soviet exercises.

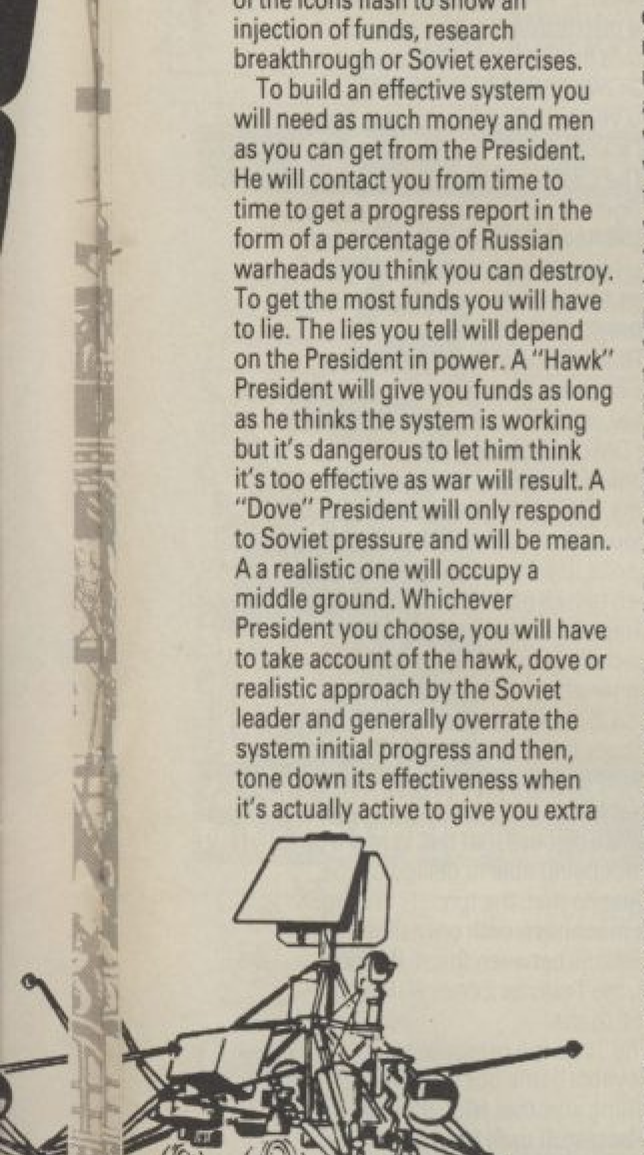
To build an effective system you will need as much money and men as you can get from the President. He will contact you from time to time to get a progress report in the form of a percentage of Russian warheads you think you can destroy. To get the most funds you will have to lie. The lies you tell will depend on the President in power. A "Hawk" President will give you funds as long as he thinks the system is working but it's dangerous to let him think it's too effective as war will result. A "Dove" President will only respond to Soviet pressure and will be mean. A a realistic one will occupy a middle ground. Whichever President you choose, you will have to take account of the hawk, dove or realistic approach by the Soviet leader and generally overrate the system initial progress and then, tone down its effectiveness when it's actually active to give you extra time to get as many systems in orbit as you can before war breaks out.

Your best chance of success and survival is to create a balanced defence system to attack the Soviet missiles (each of which contains multiple warheads) as soon as they are launched, then to take out the warheads as they are released along with their decoys in space and then finally to fire anti-missiles as the warheads begin to fall on American targets. I found the best balance was to take out as many missiles as possible, as destroying one missile will destroy all its warheads before they are released, and then to launch a major attack with (hopefully) two defence systems against the warheads in space. Ignoring the third stage usually works and is safer than the third and final stage which, if successful, creates nuclear explosions above the cities rather than on them.

However you can usually avoid that sort of posthumous victory by careful planning, a cool strategy and by using all the game screens. For example, the SDI command screen appears as only a way of checking and arming the system as and when prompted but you should continually check this without prompting as you can launch 10 or 20 rockets carrying a system before the system would prompt you to do this.

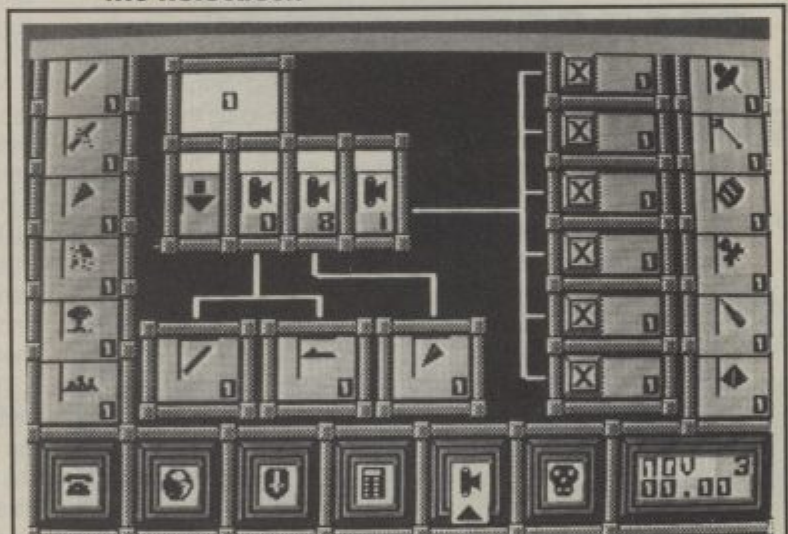
High Frontier is a good game based on a situation we hope will never happen, but it's slightly worrying that the way to win is to lie to the President!

Tony Hetherington.





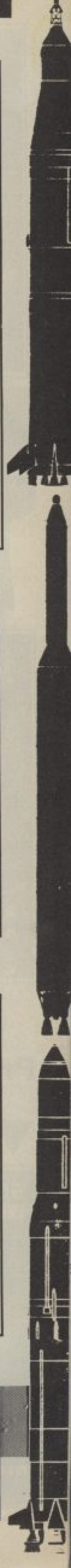
Messages flash up in the centre panel — building the tension and setting the scene for the holocaust.

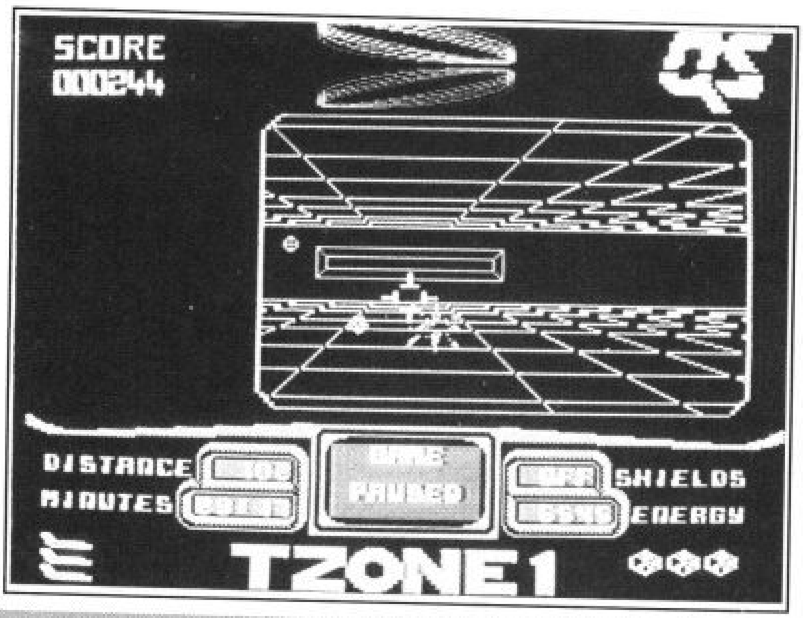


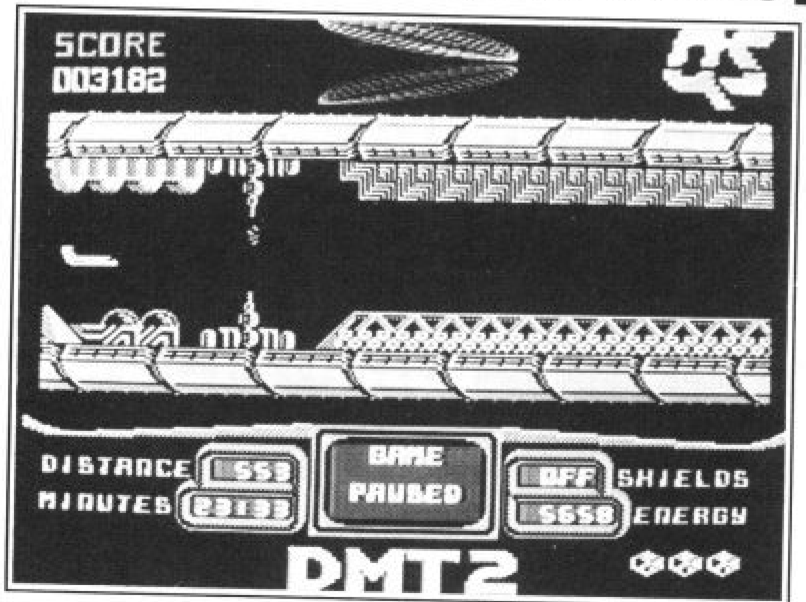
Sophisticated surveillance systems tell you everything about the enemy.

Graphics	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Sound	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Toughness	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Endurance	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Value	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

7 Overall



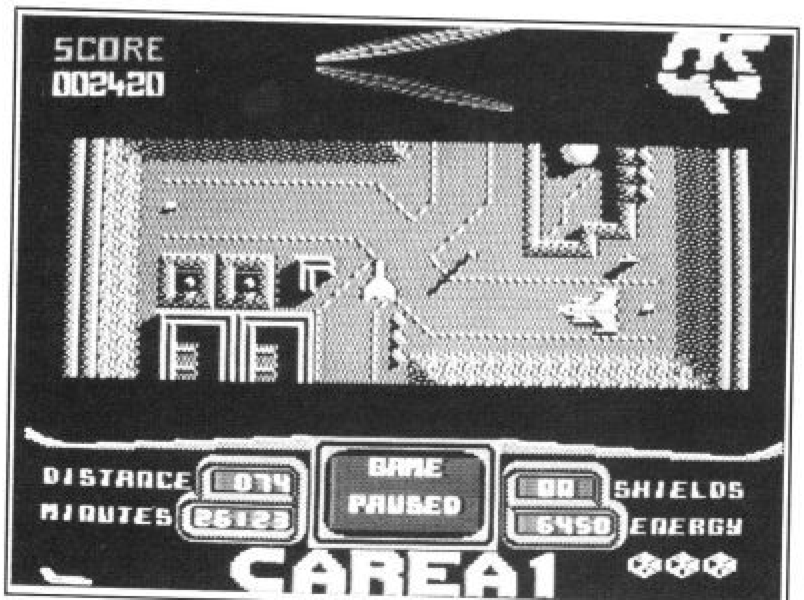




▲ The 3D Tube — nice graphics but a yawn to play.

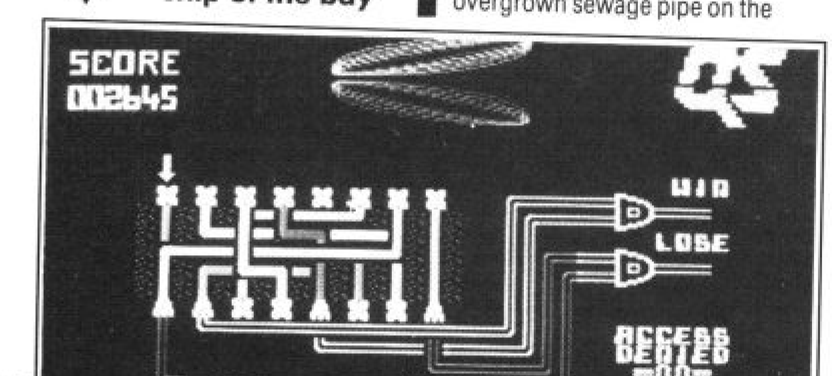
▲ Much more Scramble-like fun here.

THE TUBE



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▼ Docking on the ship of the bay



With a name like 'The Tube', you'd except there to be something tubular about this game. Well, there isn't. There's a kind of passage or corridor but nothing that approaches tubular status. The only thing remotely tubular is the drawing of an overgrown sewage pipe on the cassette inlay.

Anyway, this no ordinary tube. This tube is a scrap collection system used by aliens. The tube sucks in your spacecraft with the intention of turning it into a little pile of scrap metal.

The Tube is eight segments, long with three zones to each segment, it says here. What this means is that you get eight levels with three different zapping screens par level.

The first is the Transfer Zone. Here, supposedly, is where you get sucked into the Tube. What you actually get is a screen resembling the opening part of *Deathscape,* in which you zap asteroids and things from the perspective of your spacecraft cockpit. The idea is to stop them hitting your ship because that gradually drains it of energy.

No matter how much rubble you zap, you still finish up in the DMT & Defence Mechanism Tunnel. Perspective changes here. Now you can actually see your ship (it looks a bit like a space shuttle) and steer it through the tunnel. Not surprisingly, various bombs and things shoot up and down as you fly through, and there are narrow gaps to negotiate.

The object is to reach the other end of the DMT in order to negotiate the next screen of the segment — the Capture Zone. This is rather disappointing. You get an overhead Uridium-type view in which a few already scrapped ships are strewn around. You must dock with one of these in order to obtain energy crystals to boost your fast depleting stocks.

But docking is no mean feat. You must meet the alien ship nose to nose to complete the manoeuvre. The problem is that on this screen, your ship becomes remarkably difficult to control.

Even when you've docked, acquiring more energy is no formality. You're confronted by a line puzzle that must be solved within five seconds. Fail to solve it after two attempts and the ship you've docked with helps you lose yet another life.

The Capture Areas can be avoided altogether and you can progress to a higher level immediately provided you have enough energy. But you'll have to negotiate this tricky docking procedure eventually.

That's it really. The asteroids in the Transfer Zone get progressively faster, and the bombs and things in the DMT's become a little more cunning. But there's little else to this game. The strategic element amounts to little more than deciding when to used your smart bomb and when to turn on and off your shield.

Graphics are respectable enough, especially in the DMT', in which all manner of weird things are to be found. Some of the bombs look like eggcups floating upwards. There are rows of Barratt-like houses, pyramids, giant bubbles, spinning satellite dishes — all this to make up for not being able to design a tube.

Despite that, the tunnels are much of a muchness, with only slight variations between them. Worse still, the Transfer Zones all look the same to me.

The Tube is a reasonably enjoyable game but a bit like wathing summer telly, they save all the best stuff until the Autumn.

Bohdan Buciak

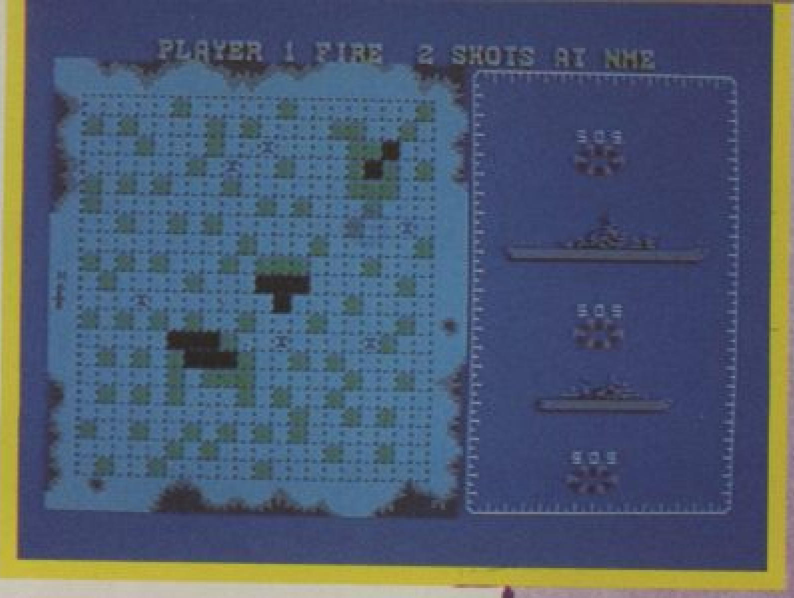
Graphics 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Sound 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Toughness 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Endurance 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Value 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

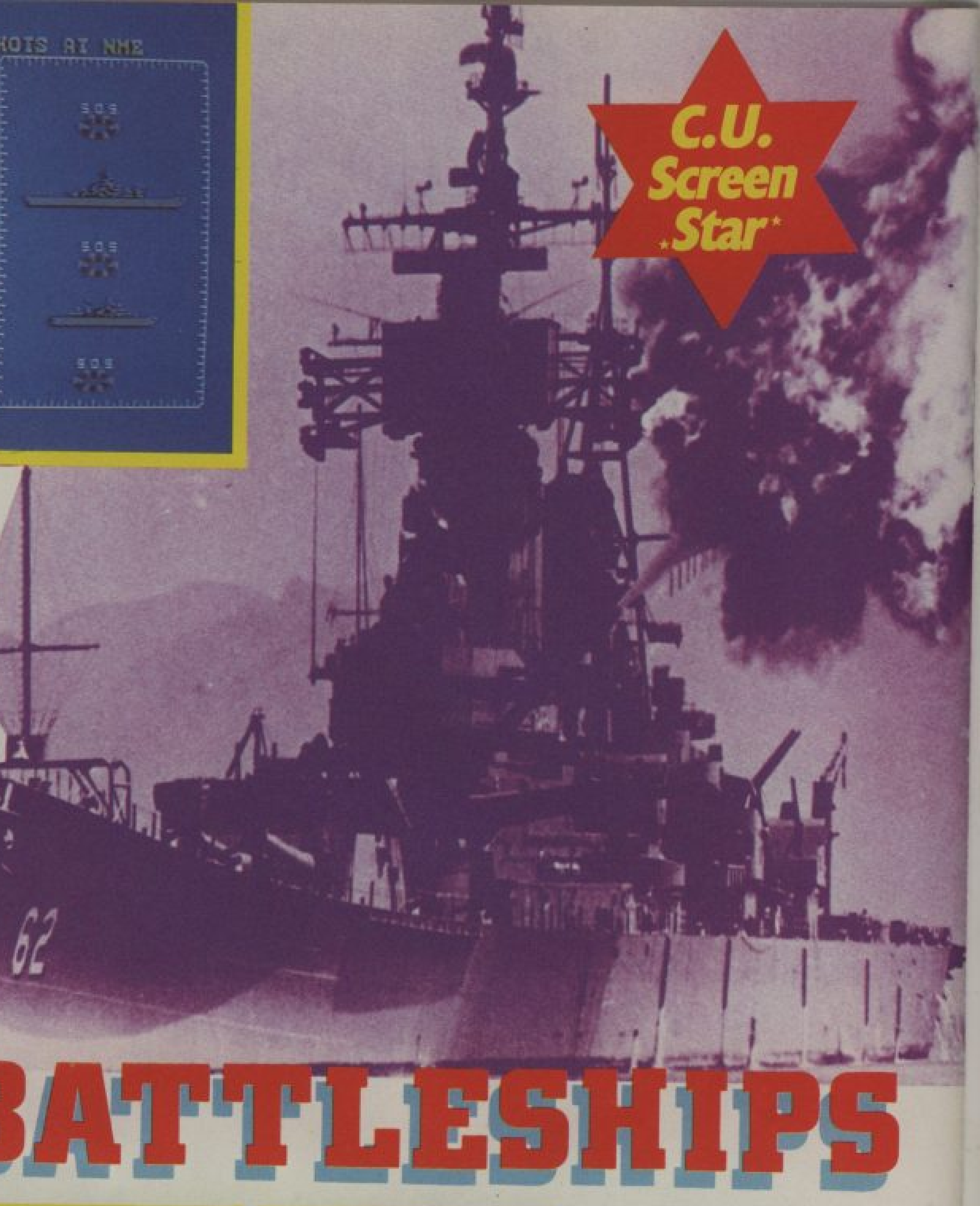
6 Overall


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BATTLESHIPS

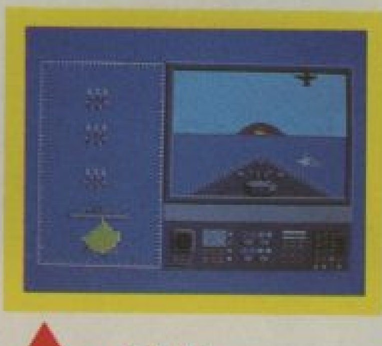
You've got to hand it to Elite. They're as sharp as a razor. A licensed game for nothing really is quite a slick piece of work. Well who owns the copyright to Battleships? No-one that's who. People have been playing it for years on scraps of paper. Now another question: who owns the licence to the computer version of Battleships? Got it in one: Elite.

Maybe you've never played Battleships. In these days of Transformers, coin-ops, laser guns, not to mention bloody computers (go on I bet you've got one.) What you do is try and sink an opponent's fleet which is marked on a 26×26 grid by calling out the co-ordinates. The ships are represented by different shapes of filled in squares on the grid.

What a complete doddle to convert into a computer game! The programmers must've taken about a week out to do this one. But as you should know by now nothing pleases me more than a simple idea well executed. I'm stupid you see. I'm also bored to death by companies who dress a load of rubbish up and call it the most brilliant simulation that was ever created.



▲ **Layout of the ship's formation.**



▲ **A hit!**

Battleships has been very neatly programmed. It's incredibly simple to play and ridiculously addictive. Elite have even improved on the area they are weakest, sound, with a reasonable tune and good effects.

On loading you are presented with a random placing of your boats on the grid. If the layout doesn't please you then you can flip the shapes around on diagonals or move them somewhere else. If you're playing the computer you'll go straight into battle, but if a friend is playing you'll have to look away while he goes through the same routine. No peeking now.

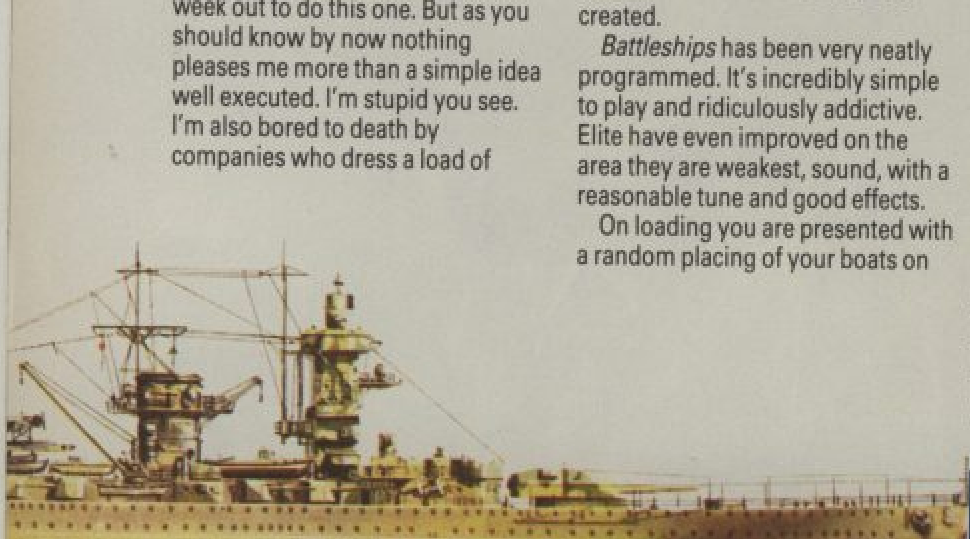
The one other thing to remember is to set the options screen to *Salvo*, otherwise you have to go through the appallingy tedious process of firing at each other one shot at a time. *Salvo* gives you four shots for every ship remaining.

Once you begin it's all down to strategy, oh and a fairly large dollop of luck. Unless you're psychic or Doris Stokes' little boy/girl you're going to have to grope around firing randomly or in patterns until you hit something. Being something of a naval type ol' Cap'n Pattenden despatched blubbering landlubbers Skipper 'Killer' Kelly and 'Poopdeck' Patterson in swift succession and then followed up by doing the computer as well. The computer isn't that bright. I know, because not only did I beat it, but it missed a very obvious pattern it should have shelled to take out my cruiser in one game.

When ships do get sunk they disappear slowly from sight and are replaced with a little lifebelt and the letters S.O.S. And when the enemy fleet has been sent to Davy Jones' locker what's left of your fleet sails past triumphantly.

Everyone laughed at Steve Wilcox, Elite's boss, when he suggested Battleships as a computer game. Now he's doing the laughing.

Mike Pattenden



Graphics	7
Sound	7
Toughness	7
Endurance	8
Value	8

8 Overall

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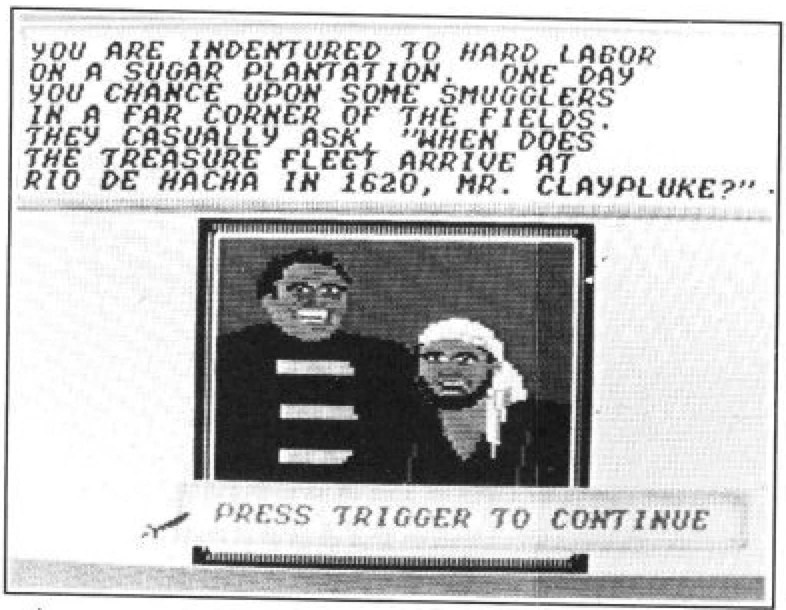
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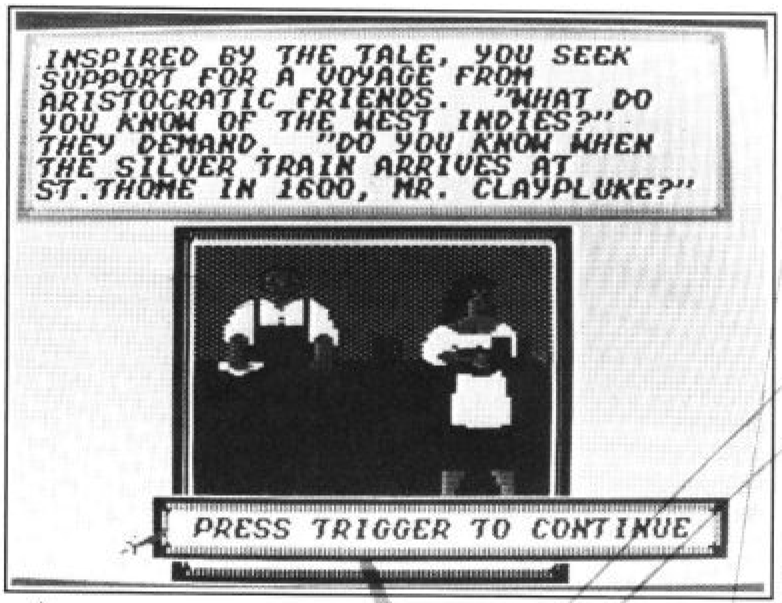
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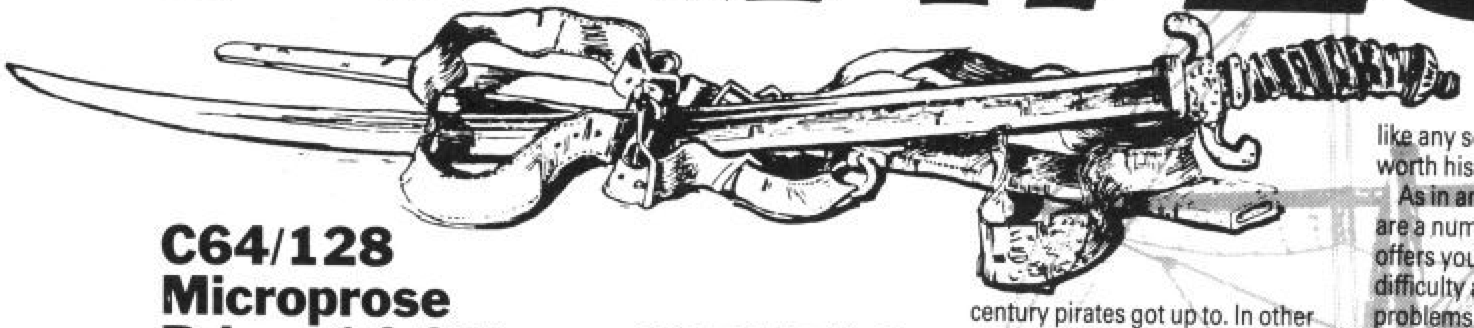


What's this? A pirate called Claypluke?



Tales of derering do on the high seas

PIRATES!



C64/128
Microprose
Price: 14.95/cass 19.95/disk

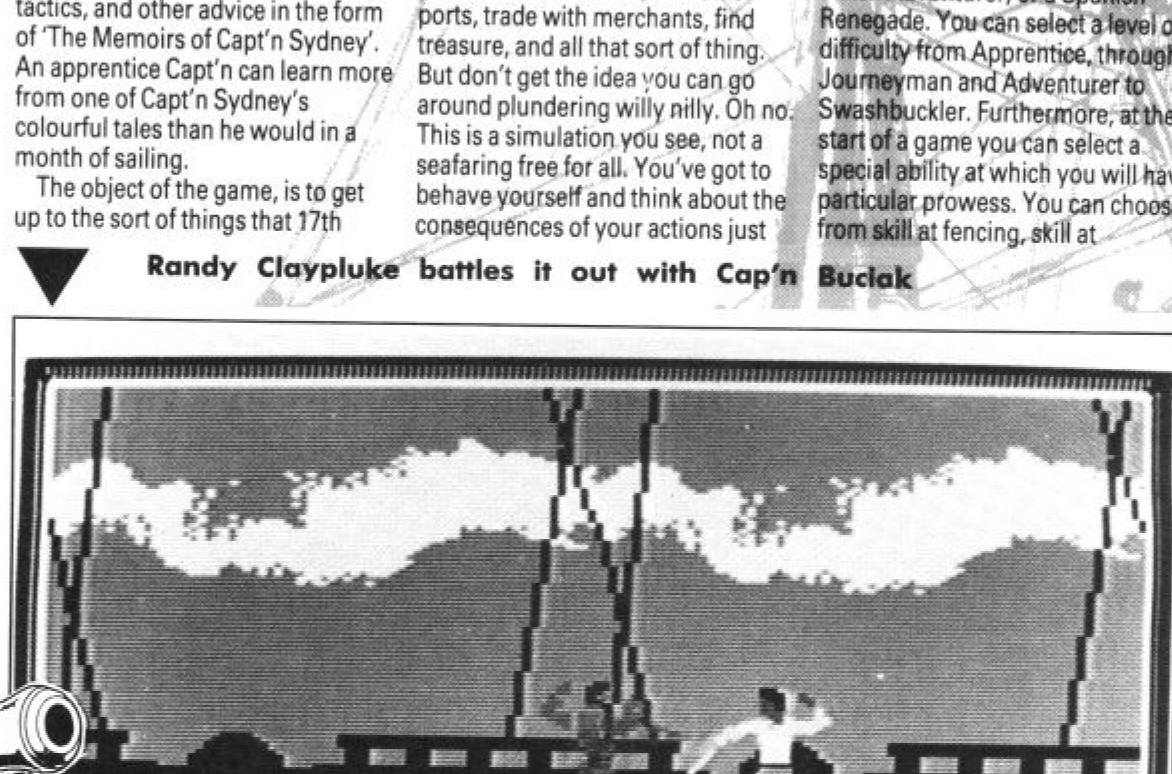
Microprose take their simulation seriously. So when they bring out a game called *Pirates!* complete with an 88 page booklet and historically accurate map of the Spanish Main you know it's going to be as near as you can get to the real thing without getting your feet wet.

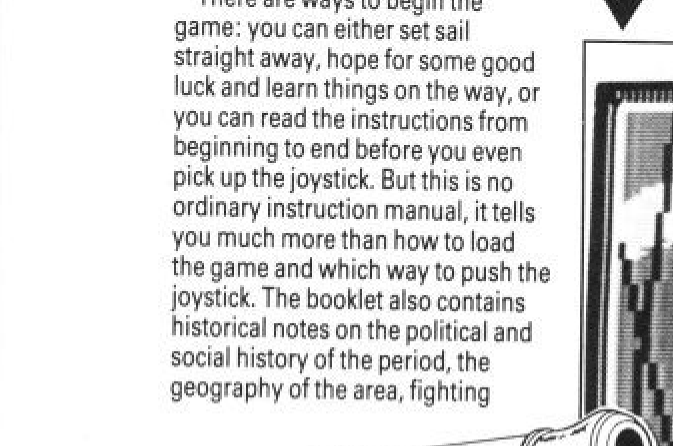
There are ways to begin the game: you can either set sail straight away, hope for some good luck and learn things on the way, or you can read the instructions from beginning to end before you even pick up the joystick. But this is no ordinary instruction manual, it tells you much more than how to load the game and which way to push the joystick. The booklet also contains historical notes on the political and social history of the period, the geography of the area, fighting tactics, and other advice in the form of 'The Memoirs of Capt'n Sydney'. An apprentice Capt'n can learn more from one of Capt'n Sydney's colourful tales than he would in a month of sailing.

The object of the game, is to get up to the sort of things that 17th century pirates got up to. In other words, find yourself a ship and a crew to man it, set sail, attack and plunder other vessels, raid other ports, trade with merchants, find treasure, and all that sort of thing. But don't get the idea you can go around plundering willy nilly. Oh no. This is a simulation you see, not a seafaring free for all. You've got to behave yourself and think about the consequences of your actions just like any self respecting sea captain worth his salt.

As in any good simulation, there are a number of scenarios in which offers you a different degree of difficulty and present different problems. *Pirates!* offers you the opportunity to become an English Buccaneer, a French Buddanneer, a Dutch Adventurer, or a Spanish Renegade. You can select a level of difficulty from Apprentice, through Journeyman and Adventurer to Swashbuckler. Furthermore, at the start of a game you can select a special ability at which you will have particular prowess. You can choose from skill at fencing, skill at

Randy Claypluke battles it out with Cap'n Buclak





navigation, skill at gunnery, wit and charm, and skill at medicine. Skill at fencing is recommended for novices.

In addition to those options you can go on a famous expedition. These are one-off voyages in which the conditions emulate those of an actual historical event. The only difference being that you are in command and not Francis Drake, or whoever. The famous expeditions you can choose from are:

Francis Drake, 1573: Where Drake ambushed the Spanish Silver Train and gained a fortune in gold.

Piet Heyn 1628: Heyn raided the Spanish Treasure Fleet off Havana and got away with 46 tons of silver for which the Dutch Government were very grateful. It ruined the Spanish economy though.

L,ollonais 1666: It means 'the man from Ollone, his real name was Jean-David Nau and he was a complete b*st*rd. He seems to have spent most of his time killing and plundering for only modest rewards. Nonetheless he became wealthy, but went back for more and ended up clubbed to death.

Henry Morgan 1671: as in Captain Morgan rum. Morgan sacked Panama, became fantastically wealthy, was knighted, and retired to Jamaica where he drank himself to death. That's the way to do it.

Baron de Pontis 1697: the baron invaded Cartagena in order to stick it to the Spanish (with whom, in addition to the, English, the French were at war). He came away with lots of loot, but paid his men a pittance, so they went back for more — and got it. De Pontis is significant because his was the last great expedition involving buccaneers.

You'll have gathered by now that *Pirates* is not lacking in authenticity. How you go about being a pirate is by the kind of arcade/adventure mix that everyone is familiar with. All decisions are taken by moving a cutlass pointer on a menu bar.

Whilst in port you can visit the governor from whom you will get the latest news and political information. If it is a friendly port and you have not attacked any of their ships (and they're not at war with your country!) the Governor might even give you dinner. If you have been very successful in fighting his enemies you may even get a title and a piece of land. The local tavern is a good place to recruit crew and buy information. If you're getting a bit tired with your expedition you can divide the plunder with the crew and start out afresh. Whilst in town (or anywhere else) you can also get additional information. You can read the ship's log, check you individuals and the party's status, or get your bearings from a sun sight.

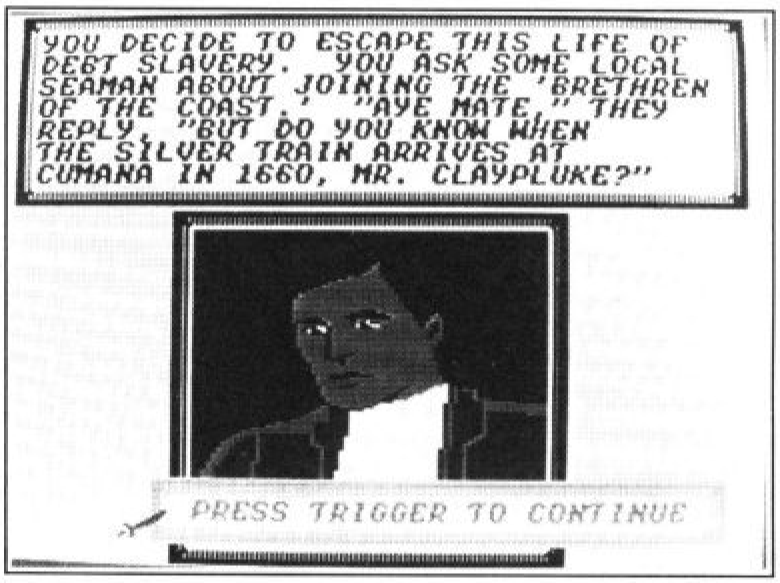
But of course piracy is about more than going into town for the shopping and a bit of a gossip. If it's fighting you're looking for you'll find it both at sea and on land. Sea battles begin with the sighting of sails on the horizon. If you decide to investigate the lookout will teli you what kind of ship it is and what colours she's flying. Once you have closed for battle the tactics are up to you.

The display shows each ship in the water. You can turn to port or starboard using the joystick and raise and lower the sails similarly. At any time you can close on the enemy ship and board her for a sword fight, but it's as well to give her a few broadsides first. That shakes them up a bit. Once you've boarded you engage in a swordfight with the captain of the other vessel.

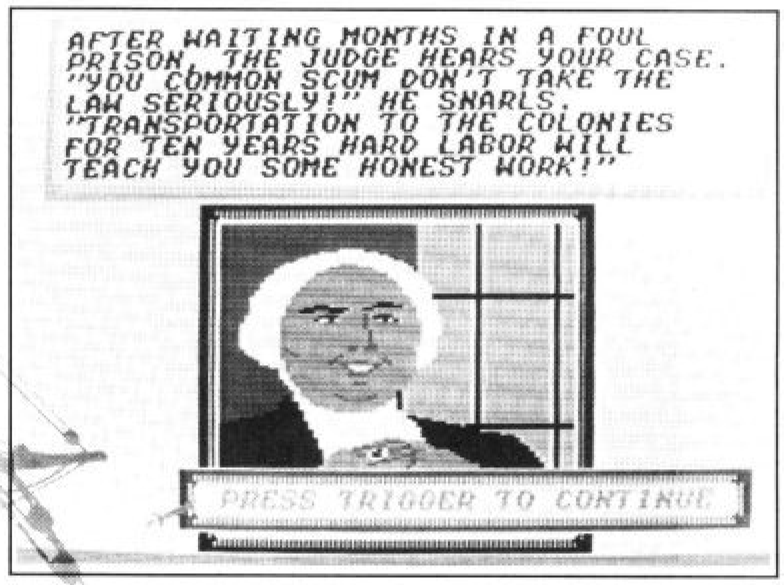
First you can decide whether to use your rapier, longsword or cutlass, each has its own special advantages. Swordfighting moves are carried out by joystick movements similar to those used in other one-on-one fighting simulations, but result in combinations of moves. While you are fighting the enemy captain the fighting carries on all around you. You don't see it, but the success of your crew depends on its morale and its morale depends on how well you are doing against the enemy captain.

The morale of the respective crews is displayed at the bottom of the screen and ranges from wild! (pretty good) to panic (not so hot). When the crew panics, or its number is reduced to one, a single blow to the commanding captain will bring about a surrender. So the way to win sea battles is either to attack with superior forces, or send your crew wild with a display of courage and skill with the sword so that they can win even though outnumbered.

You needn't confine your pirating activities to the high seas. You can also attack towns and forts both from the sea and from land. Each method has its own tactical considerations. When attacking from land you must control groups of men with muskets. Manouvere them into advantageous positions using the woods for cover and they will fire on the enemy as soon as they are in range. If you are successful in forcing the enemy to panic, they will run for it and you can storm the fort where a sword fight will take place on the ramparts. Once again you must lead from the front, raising the morale of your crew with an exhibition of heroic swordsmanship. Alternatively you can take the fort from the seaward side, but you must land close enough to the fort so that the men will march to it and, of course avoid being hit too many times by the fort guns.



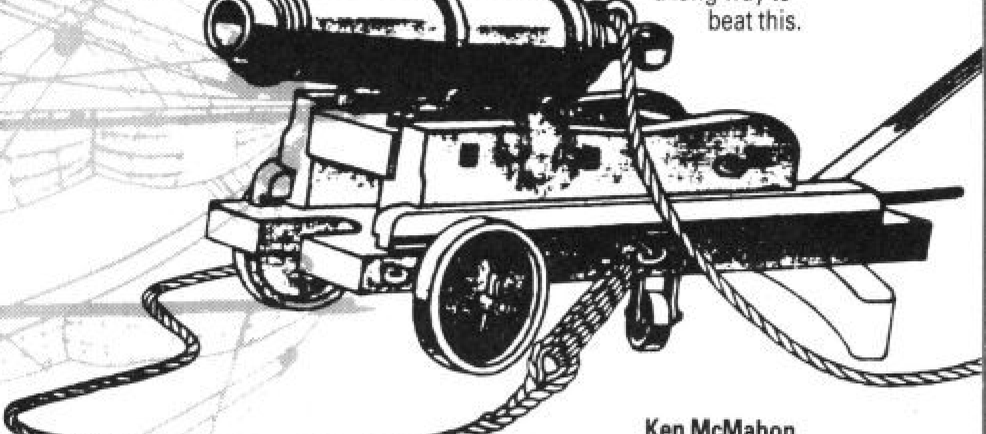
Those pirates still want to know about that silver train



Oh dear, Claypluke is sent to the colonies by the judge. Can't wait to read his diary of imprisonment

Describing the various aspects of pirates doesn't really do it justice. For one thing it's such a complex and extensive game only a general idea can be given here. Secondly, the game is much more than the sum of the arcade elements from which it's made up.

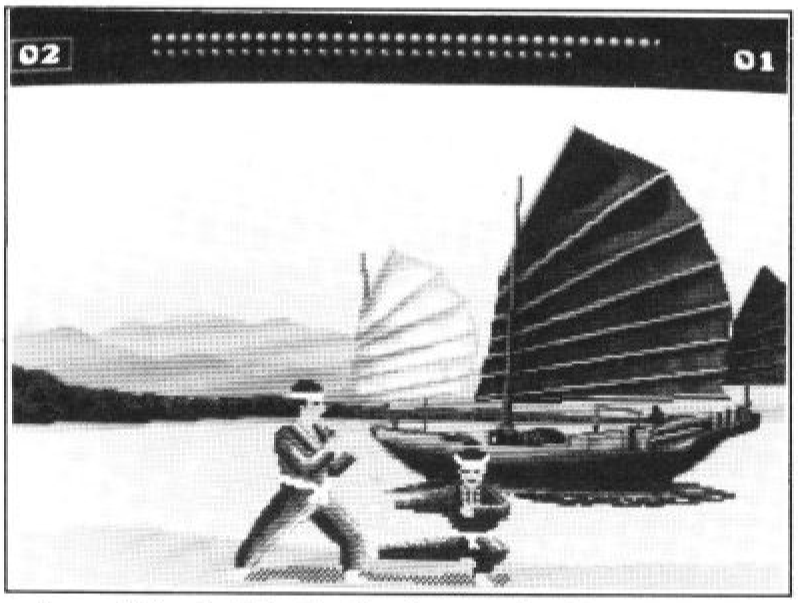
In terms of realism, historical accuracy, gameplay and fun, *Pirates* has it all. It's a hundred times better than the other so-called 'swashbuckling simulations' I've seen and if anyone else was planning to cash in on the current passion for pirates they'd have to go a long way to beat this.



Ken McMahon

Graphics	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Sound	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Toughness	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Endurance	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Value	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

9 Overall



▲ Nice junk in the background — the game is OK though.



▲ The beat 'em up boom hits the Amiga.

AMIGA KARATE

Amiga
Eidersoft
Price: £19.95/disk



▼ Beautiful detail on the backdrop.

● Yes, Karate Games are all the rage again, and here is one of the first Amiga beat 'em ups. But we've got none of these funny titles, no *Exploding Fists* or *Ninja Masters*, the game is quite simply called *Amiga Karate*.

But simple it's not, and when you get to 7th Dan well . . . anyway that's not important right now.

Now most good games have a plot of some kind which puts you in the mood for a bit of the old joystick wiggling, but I am afraid there doesn't seem to be one this time. Nope, no story telling how your kid sister was beaten with a hot chopstick or how the village tyrant made everybody give up chicken fried rice.

And to do that, you need skill, courage, dedication and a good firing thumb. But as we all know, most gamesters come with these features as standard.

Having been thrown into the ring with a bloke who could put Bruce Lee to shame, things start to look bleak. In fact they look even bleaker when you look at the instructions and find that they are in another language!

But, as luck would have it, I finally found the English ones, which were hiding under a full stop.

However, learning the moves wasn't too difficult, and I soon decked the would-be Charlie Chan. It was after a few bouts that I discovered the programmers humour.

Fighting with a few white belts is OK, one at a time nice 'n' easy like. Even when some little b . . . started throwing shurikens about all over the shop I managed to dodge and weave saving my knee caps from a close encounter of the fatal kind. It's when you have to fight two blokes, yellow belts no less, at the same time with death stars still flying about that you can start to worry.

Well, anyway, before you progress to the next belt you have to go through a special bonus-type screen. If you don't make the bonus screen then you lose a life and have to try again. Muff it three times and the game's over. Some bonus!

Just imagine it. There you are, having just beaten five brown belts, feeling really proud and then you get trashed by a couple of flying china vases!

Vases? Oh yes, the bonus screen involves kicking or punching at vases in order to break them and go on to the next level.

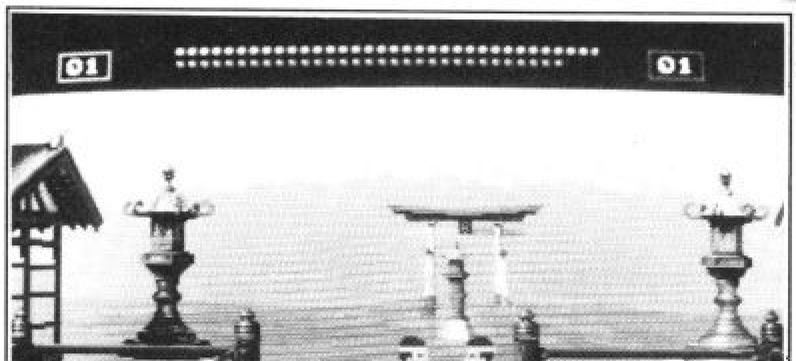
While you're fighting the hordes, you can't help noticing the really smart backdrops which have been created for you to fight in front of. There are five different colour backgrounds which depict various settings from Buddhas to boats and houses and H'oriential temples.

Sound, too, is quite good, featuring digitised screams and background noises like birds tweeting, sea tides flowing and the odd bit of local gossip. The loading music is excellent.

Have I got anything to moan about? Well, the animation is very wooden. Just look at the front kick, no knee bending! Also the hit scoring system is a little stupid, it should be more like *Fist* or *Int. Karate*. After all, I think a flying number 47 in the gob would knock you over, don't you?

Overall a fairly good game, but not really what we should expect from an Amiga.

Chris Cain



Graphics	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Sound	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Toughness	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Endurance	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Value	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

8 Overall



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KARATE KiD II

Price: £24.95 | **Amiga Microdeal**



Beat 'em ups have been popular for years on the 64 with games like Way of the Exploding Fist spawning dozens of clones. The Amiga has yet to see any really good fighting games. This is all set to change with the release of Karate Kid Pt II by Cornwall-based Microdeal.

Anyone who has seen the film will know that it is a slightly above average American good-guy versus bad-guy film about a young martial arts fanatic, Daniel Larusso, and his ageing mentor Myagi. In the film they travel back to Myagi's South Pacific homeland (to say goodbye to Myagi's dying father) only to find an age old conflict waiting for them. As with most of these films, the climax is a lengthy martial arts fight in which Daniel fights back, against all odds, to win against an initially superior opponent, Kung Fu Rocky!

The game takes the idea of Daniels various fights, together with two other scenes from the film, and converts them into an excellent combat/fighting game which really does the Amiga justice.

Using a joystick, rather than the Amiga mouse, you take on the role of Daniel Larusso. Unfortunately, unlike the film, you have no guarantee of success, and instead must fight your way past various baddies, most of whom are, at least to begin with, far faster and better than you. Anyone not used to a good game on the Amiga, would be stunned by the quality of both the graphics and the sound of the Karate Kid's loading sequence. With what looks to be a digitised version of the game's poster on screen, and a computerised version of Peter Cetera's 'The Glory of Love' playing along in the background, it is simple to see why the phrase 'interactive cinema' is the latest hype-buzz word to describe various games on the Amiga.

As you begin the game, your first choice is whether you want a one or two player game. Once this has been decided, you enter the game proper. Although having seen the film will not help you play the game, many of the scenarios have been faithfully recreated by Microdeal, and in this sense, the game is a much more acceptable film tie-in than some.

The opening screen shows you and your opponent 'facing-off' until one or other makes the first move. The rest is mayhem. Fists and feet fly in all directions and soon it becomes apparent that you have lost. After a few practices at the first screen, togethr with a long look at all the moves described in the manual (something which, after many years of playing all sorts of computer games, I regard as some kind of failure on my behalf) I suddenly began to make some headway with my first opponent.

Wham! A roundhouse kick to the head. Swish! A back somersault quickly followed by Crack! A high punch to the chest, and I am on my



Daniel shows some water where to get off.



Indoor kicking — brilliant detail on the tiger.



Rustic Japanese scene complete with rustic Japanese Motorbike(?).

C.U. Screen Star

way to meeting the next opponent. Although scoring is an important part of Karate Kid, and indeed only good hits are rewarded with points, the real aim of the game is to progress, and this is achieved by reducing your opponents strength to zero (indicated by a strength meter to the right of his score). Certain attacks score better than others, and it generally follows that the more complicated the manoeuvre the higher scoring and more effective the result.

All told there are ten offensive moves, including high kicks, sweeps, roundhouses, and various punches, as well as forward and backward somersaults, duck and jump. Having played games such as International Karate and Exploding Fist on the 64, Karate Kid is a genuine improvement. No longer are all the moves dictated by limited memory and poor graphics. In Karate Kid the moves are all as smooth as silk, with knee and elbow movement clearly discernible as you or your opponent fly through the air. The characters are not quite as big as they could be, but they are so well animated that this can easily be ignored. The backgraounds too are immaculatelydrawn, with amazing attention to detail.

Sampled sounds accompany each punch or hit. These are fine. One thing that did get on my nerves, however, was the music which played almost non-stop throughout the game.

In all there are 11 different fighting scenes, starting with inside a dojo (apparently where karate fans practice) and go on until you meet the final encounter with Chozen in the Castle of King Shohashi. As well as these screens there are two bonus screens, and it is these which sold me on the game the first time I saw them.

One of these challenges you to catch a fly, something I have only managed once. This is rewarded with a healthy bonus, depending on how quickly the fly is caught.



Oriental lakeside — check out the detail on the water.

The second bonus screen is simpler. You, as Daniel, must break as many vertical slabs of ice as you can, up to a maximum of six. Unfortunately you only have your hand to do it with. To achieve the perfect result and destroy all the ice you must waggle the joystick as fast as possible, pressing the fire button at peak speed and releasing in when contact is made with the ice. To help you gauge the speed of your waggling, there is a drum in the top right hand corner.

Both screens use the Amiga's graphics to the full, particularly the latter which apparently uses digitised pictures from the film.

My biggest criticism of the game is the unsatisfactory way in which it finishes. The one time I managed to defeat all the baddies, and even win the final conflict, I was confronted with a drum on the screen and some instructions that told me I must now learn the secret of the drum — or die. Not surprisingly I took the easy way out and died! What secret? How on earth should I know what they are talking about? Ah well, maybe I'll just have to phone Microdeal and ask.

That criticism apart, Karate Kid is an excellent game. Apart from Starglider, it is probably the best U.K. sourced Amiga game.

Although converted from the Atari ST, Microdeal have had the good sense not to rest on their laurels in the conversion, but to use the added graphics on the Amiga, and to add six more action screens, which drastically improve the game's lastability. Exciting business reviewing Amiga games these days.

Francis Jago

II

C.U. Screen Star



Rating	Score (1–10)
Graphics	8
Sound	7
Toughness	8
Endurance	9
Value	7

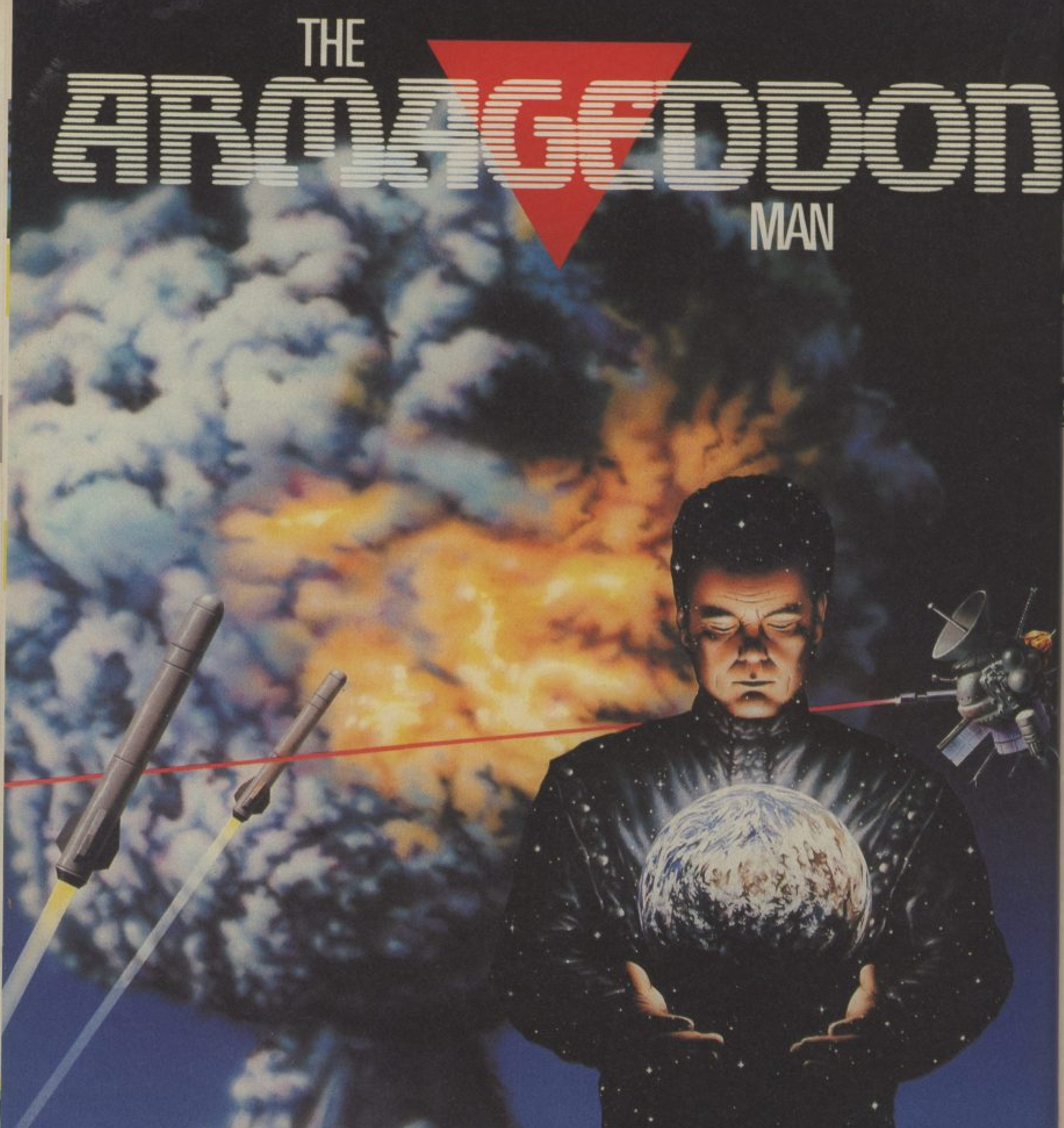
8 Overall

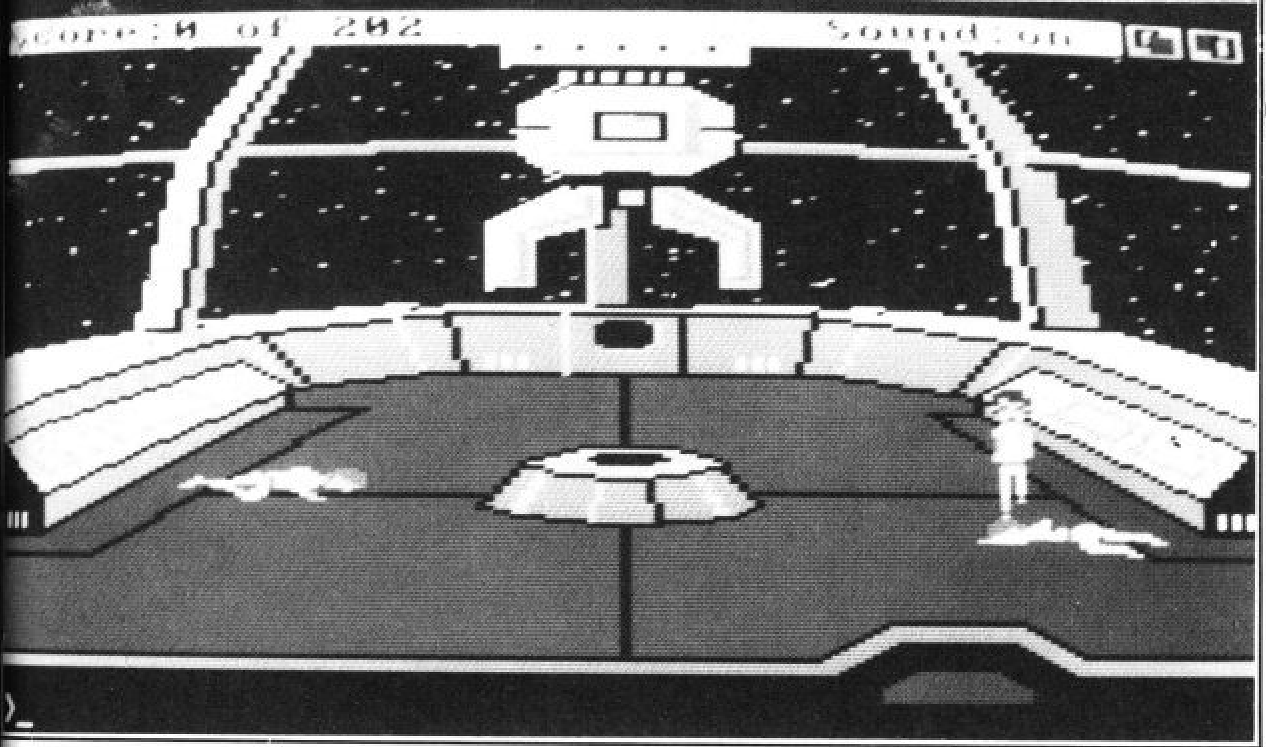
All this and extreme violence too . . .



Myagi (schizophrenia seems to be a big problem) where, armed with only a pair of chopsticks, you must attempt to catch a fly tht whizzes around the screen. Graphically this screen differs from the others in that the only moving parts (bar the fly) is the arm and hand of Myagi.




THE
ARMAGEDDON
MAN

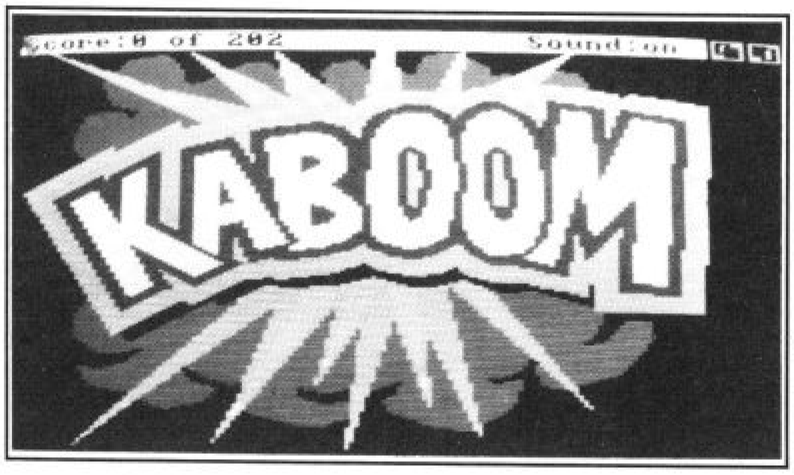


● Screen Scene

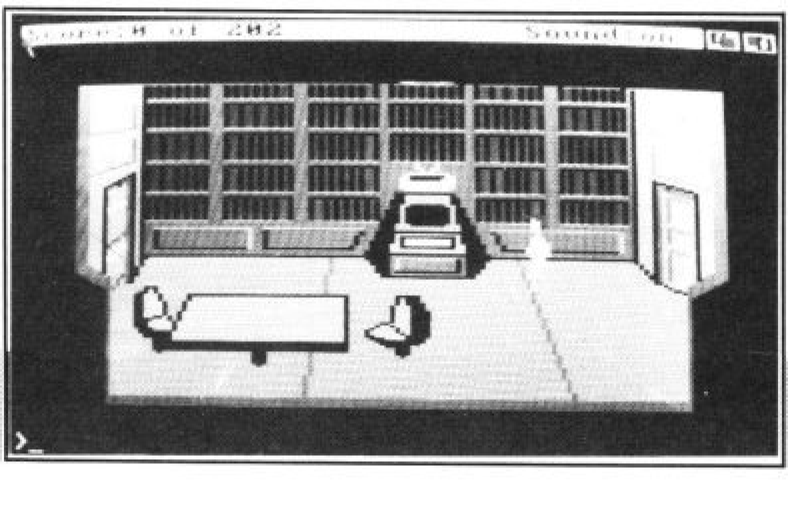
◀ **Cockpit view — but a cock up of a game.**

Space Quest

• Amiga
Sierra
Price: £19.95/disk



◀ **Kaboom — now there was a good game.**



◀ **Nice ship — shame about the game.**

Although I would prefer not to describe myself as gullible, I do have a little self-esteem left, I would willingly accept that I am an avid consumer. However, years of playing computer games has taught me the ability to spot a really bad game a mile off, however well it is disguised.

Space Quest is just such a game. Looking at the lavish packaging you would immediately think that the game was everything you had ever dreamed of in an arcade-adventure for the Amiga. Delve a little further, however, and this dream will turn into a nightmare. When I was first given the game, a quick scan of the back of the box, generally a good way of gleaning info, revealed that *Space Quest* was an arcade adventure with (to quote the bumph) "Out of this world three-dimensional graphics". Now either Stevie Wonder wrote these words, or they are absolute rubbish.

The game starts with a pretty poor opening sequence, especially compared to the likes of the *Karate Kid II* (reviewed elsewhere in this issue), and gets even worse.

You take on the role of Roger Wilco and you must attempt to sort out the obvious mess in which the ship you are on seems to be. A little more reading of the manual will reveal that a group of baddies, the Sariens, are trying to capture the all-important Space Generator, and that you, Roger Wilco, are the only man who can render the Generator useless and thereby save the entire universe.

The graphics have to be seen to be believed. With background reminiscent of early Vic 20 games in their lack of resolution and imagination, it would take a painfully naive man to believe the quotes on the back of the packaging were written in good faith. Nor are the characters any better. When I first saw the game, I was struck by the resemblance to early Ultimate Play the Game arcade adventures on the Commodore 64, with each leg drawn from three pixels, the middle one supposedly representing a knee!

Although I am not sure, it seems likely that the American company that produce this game, Sierra On-line (or plain Sierra as they now seem to be known) have ported Space Quest from a machine such as the Commodore 64 and done little, if anything, to upgrade it to the Amiga. Even the animation is poor, with screen flicker and jerk frequently evident.

Perhaps not surprisingly, judging by the rest of the game, the sound is also very poor. Small spot effects, which amount to little more than occasional squeaks and bangs, and a dreadful tune to start is not really up to scratch, especially when compared to the fabulous tunes that accompany *Starglider*.

Another incredibly annoying thing about *Space Quest* is the continual disk access that seems to be necessary. As everyone who uses the Amiga knows, the disk drives are hardly fast in normal use, but somehow Sierra have managed to slow them down even more, to the extent that each time you move from one location to another within the game, you must sit through a good 30 seconds of grinding and banging as the disk searchers for information. Control of Roger Wilco is by mouse, joystick or keyboard, but the real problem is the speed at which he moves. Sloths are more agile! Even if you map the game, it is also too easy to get bored to sleep before you can ever find somewhere new. Not even the fact that the game is the first on the Amiga in which the actions of your man are dependent both on joystick and text input makes any difference, this game's dullness runs very very deep.

Francis Jago

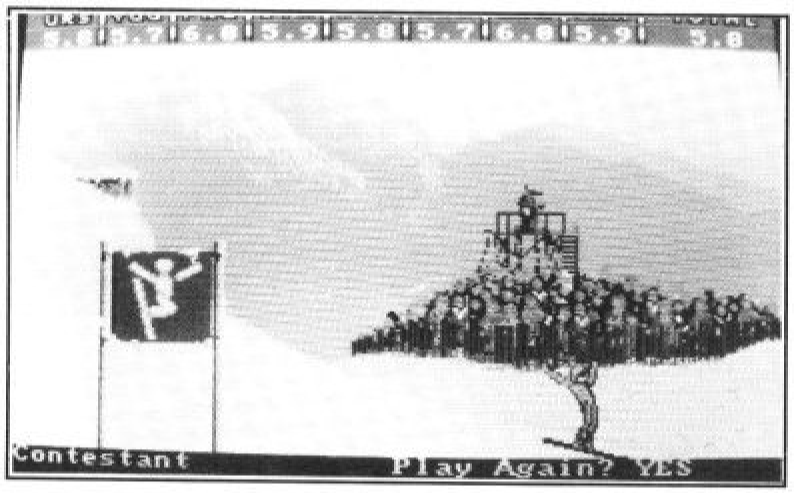
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Graphics	■	■								
Sound	■	■								
Toughness	■	■								
Endurance	■	■								
Value	■	■								

2
Overall



Biatholon: a test of joystick stamina.

Hot dogging: good marks!





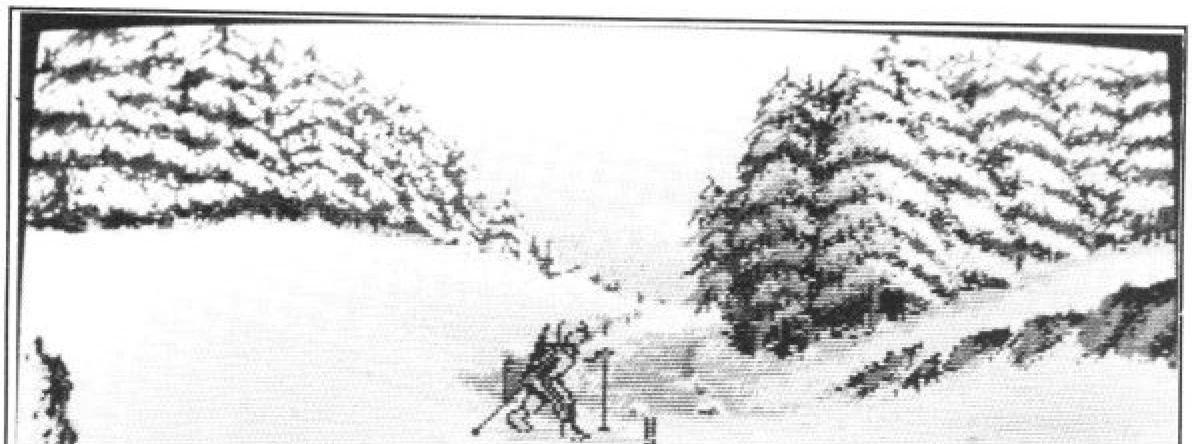
WINTER GAMES

Amiga
Epyx
Price: £24.99

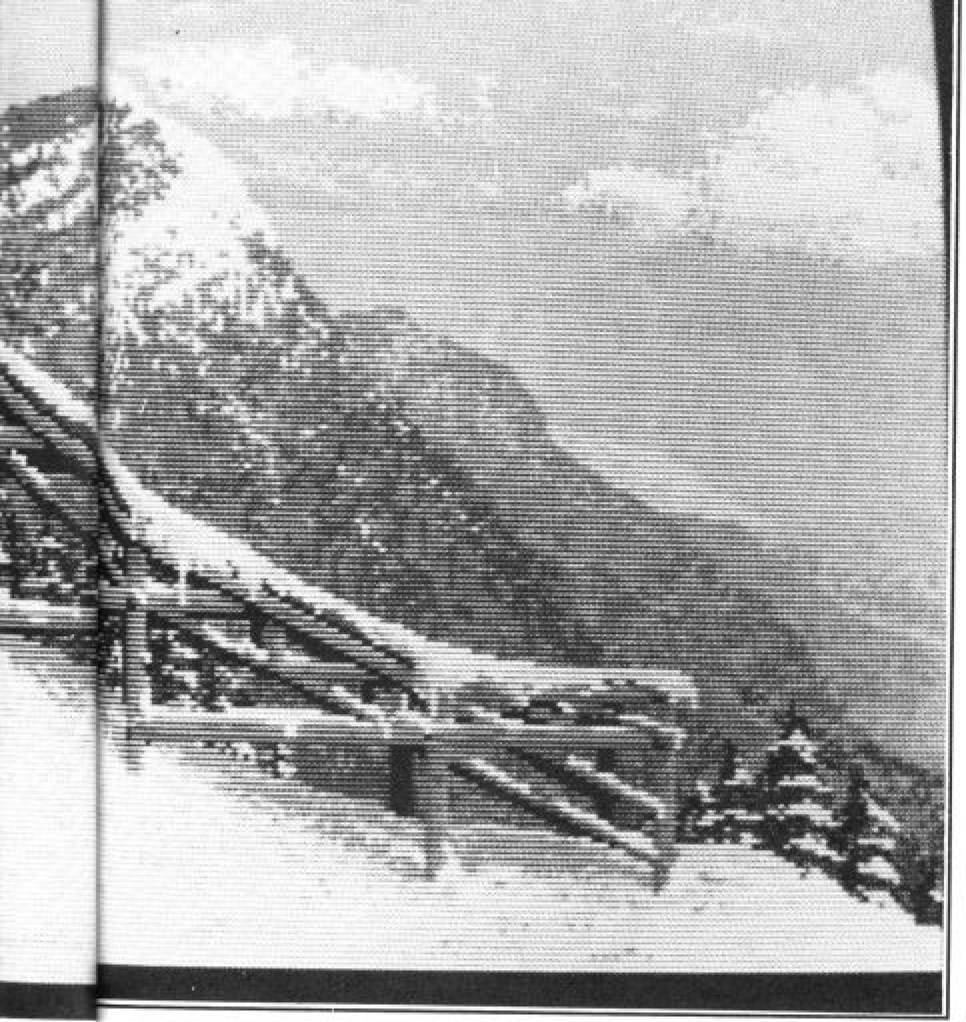
Just before I start this review, I must tell you a joke which I heard last week; 'What are an Englishman's two favourite days of the year? Christmas day and summer!!. Geddit!! The reason for this humorous break from the usual hard hitting Commodore User Amiga games reviews is that the game I have been testing is about as relevant in the middle of our supposed summer as taking thermal underwear to Greece.

Regular readers of this magazine will already know that I am a dedicated fan of this type of game, and rate *World Games* up with almost anything else I have played. It will not suprise you, therefore, to learn that *Winter Games* too is a cracker. Many of the features are carried over, including the loading and theme music.

Winter Games (or *WG* as I will now call it, purely to same my poor fingers from getting cramp) is split into 7 seperate events, each one of which plays completely independently. Once the opening ceremony has taken place, you are faced with the choice of competing in all the events, competing in some, viewing the world records, or simply practicing.



On your marks.



The ski jump — looks good, even in black and white.



Good markmanship.



Not such a good landing.

Having played this type of game before, and generally being a pretty self confident guy I jumped in and took on all events. After entering my name and choosing a country to represent, I was confronted with an event that had me instantly baffled; **figure skating**. After five minutes reading of the manual (which, incidentally, is both clearly written and informative), I got the gist of what had to be done, and began. One minute later, after the worst skating routine imaginable, and a score of 0.2, I was back at the manual searching for clues! It turns out that it is not good enough just to skate forwards and backwards, but that you must perform a certain number of tricks, and all within a specified time.

God must have taken my vow literally, for it turns out that the next event is **free skating.** Using the same impressive graphics as figure skating, with a huge and excellently animated female character moving effortlessly (unless I am in control) across a shimmering rink of ice, free skating plays identically, except that there are no set routines. Aha, I thought, a chance for me to improvise. Obviously the judges were not impressed, and I managed the fabulous total 1.2!

You can imagine my dismay, therefore, when I saw that the next event was **speed skating.** Not more skating!!!. In fact, turns out that speed skating is a much simpler task, that relies less on dexterity, and more on rhythm and timing. The concept is simple enough; you must race the computer over a 300 metre course as fast as possible, although in practice the only real challenge is improving on your own times. Again the graphics are good, if not quite up to the high standard of the rest of the game.

It was on the next event that I knew I would get hooked; **hot dogging.** As a sport I am unlikely ever to try, especially as the thought alone makes me feel uncomfortably queasy, this is one of the best to play on a computer. The object is to jump off a small ramp and perform as many veried stunts as possible before you land smoothly on the ground. There are a total of 6 different stunts, all of which receive different scores, by combining two it is even possible to score a perfect 10.

Of the stunts, the most dynamic are back flips and mule kicks, both of which look completely impossible. As with all of the best games (or in this case events), when hot dogging you find yourself gripping the joystick like a vice, and only when you have landed safely do you realise quite how much effort you have put into this supposedly relaxing pastime.

Hot dogging is followed by two more ski orientated events, ski jump and biathlon. I may be scared at the idea of hot dogging, but this is nothing compared to the terror that fills my body every time I watch television and see people throwing themselves off jumps with only two small strips of wood between them and the great beyond. On a computer, however, it is all very much more pallatable.

The event is split into two sections; the first of which sees you leaving the ramp, and the second, hopefully. sees you landing. In between these two, you must use the joystick to keep your character in the optimum position for flying, in order to receive points for both distance and style.

Biathlon, on the other hand, is an event for people with a steady hand and a calm nature. The object here is to ski around a course, stopping occasionally to shoot a series of targets with a rifle. This may sound simple, but when you realise that the course is very hilly, and that your heart rate is continually measured, you will realise that there is a very difficult balancing act to be maintained. Go too fast, and you will not be steady enough to hit the targets (thus losing valuable points), go too slow, and your time will be poor.

As with almost all the events, the graphics during the biathlon section are excellent, right down to the beating heart displayed in the botton right hand corner.

As with all the Epyx sports games I have played, the most exciting and challenging event has been left to the end. The bobsled run uses quasi three dimensional graphics to give you control of a two man sled down a long and very windy course like the Cresta Run.

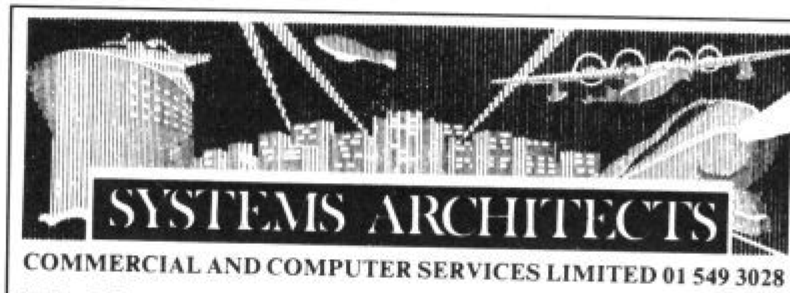
Using a split screen, the left half showing the course, and the right you in your sled, the event is the real high point of *WG*.

As with all Epyx games, what makes *WG* stand head and shoulders above the competition is the attention to detail. Throughout the game there are little touches that show that the game was not rushed out purely to capitalise on a few extra sales. The sound effects, varying from rythmic drums to cheering crowds are all excellent, and the graphics are of a standard that few other machines could match. These points, added to a permanently recorded 'World Records' section ensure that Winter Games will become a firm favourite with Amiga gamesters. It may not be cheap, but compared to some of the rubbish recently released on the Amiga, it looks like a positive bargain.

Francis Jago

Graphics	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Sound	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Toughness	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Endurance	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Value	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

8
Overall



SYSTEMS ARCHITECTS



APB

ATARI (3 × 10p)



If nothing alse, the appearance and instant popularity of *Paperboy* a few years back proved one thing — there's nothing like a good hearty belly-laugh to turn a reasonably good game into a massive hit.

Ever since there's been a steady stream of games with funny, wacky and sometimes downright absurd themes to drag us post-industrial pre-apocalypse kids out of our gloom.

The latest offering in the "Laugh — I nearly upchucked" stakes is Atari's *APB*, and, judging by the effects a couple of hours' exposure to it had on this confirmed miserabilist, it's going to take some beating.

APB is an American acronym for "all points bulletin", which is an order sent by police HQ to all patrol cars in an area to look out for and apprehend a certain suspect.

In *APB* you play an everyday patrol-car cop on the beat, Officer Bob. The customised cabinet has a seat for you to rest your law-enforcing posterior, an accelerator for your size elevens, a steering-wheel and two buttons — siren and fire.

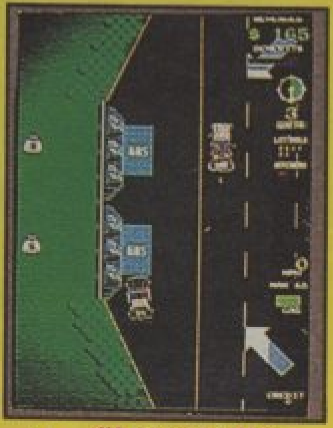
You have a *Spyhunter*-style view of proceedings — in other words, you view the action from above. For most of the early stages of the game, the important controls are the accelerator, the steering wheel and the siren. The fire button only comes into play if and when you pick up a shooter, which apparently you can acquire on Day Four of your tour of duty.

The game kicks off with a practise round, in which you drive your motor around a training course, "apprehending" traffic cones. You do this by pressing siren while the siren "sight" is on the offending cone. The faster you go with the siren button pressed, the further out in front of you the siren sight drifts. Hit an object without having you siren on results in a collision, and a "demerit".

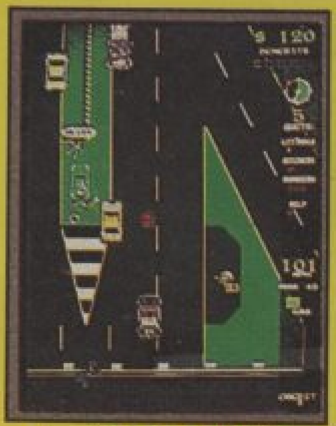
Once you've completed your practise round, you're given your briefing Hill Street Blues-fashion, by the desk sergeant. On Day One, your job is to hand out tickets to pink carloads of unecologically-minded hippies who are littering the highway.

You cruise along until you see one of the offending beatnik-mobiles trailing litter, then you hit them with the siren. "Hey, pull over", you growl in your Officer Dibble voice. "OK, OK" they grumble back as they're nicked. You've got a quota of litterbugs to nail and a fairly tight time limit so you have to move pretty nippily about the cityscape. But do be careful out there — what with the crowded car lanes, sudden diversions, roadworks and even level crossings, one false move can mean a very painful collision ("ouch-ouch-ouch-ouch-ooooh", mutters the frazzled Officer Bob as his poor car disintegrates around him) and a very severe demerit bill.

Every so often, your stomach begins to rumble and you say to yourself "I sure could use a doughnut". These nutritionally-dubious items can be picked up at one of the roadside dougnut huts — the doughnuts are rapidly pushed out into the path of the oncoming traffic, then just as rapidly retracted, and you've got to time your drive-past just right in order to score one of these calorie-laden delights. Apart from adding inches to your waistline, they have the effect of prolonging your playing time.



"Just wait till I'm tanked up, pinko litterbugs . . ."



"Hookers hitching, taxis tooting, cars crashing — phew!"



Watch out for the tree, Bob! CRUNNCCHHH! "Ohhh . . ."



After all that, I need a doughnut."

There are also gas stations to be called into and roadside drive-in shops where you can buy equipment for your auto, including extra acceleration and, as mentioned before, weaponry.

Assuming you've met your quota, you'll be given a slap on the back by the Sarge, and then it's into the staffroom for a briefing on your next task.

Obviously your tasks grow in toughness as the days pass. As well as having your routine ticketing duties increased, you're now given a specific villain to arrest, bring in and interrogate. First of these is the dope-dealing Freddy Freak, whose flower-festooned van must be forced off the road. Now your entreaties to "pull over" are ignored or responded to by grunts of "never", "get lost", "@£$&¾" or even by the occasional stick of dynamite.

If you manage to get Freddy into the interrogation room, and to "persuade" him to confess (your silhouette is seen through the door-blinds, repeatedly clipping the suspect about the ear with scant regard to the legal rules as to the interrogation of persons in custody), you'll be set on the path of other nasties such as the lecherous Candy Goodbody, the trigger-happy Sid Sniper and the Capo di Tutti Capi himself Luigi de Muccio.

If you fail to meet you quotas, or earn too many demerits, you get a roasting from the Sarge, then the other guys in the station truss you up and throw you in a trash can, signifying your dismissal.

Even if it were just a straight driving/car chase game, *APB* would be pretty addictive — it's fast-moving, fun and tough to play. But what makes it really special are the little snatches of hilariously apt speech and brilliant cornball graphics. Anybody who liked *Paperboy* for his interjected *"What a jerk I am"'s* will love the hapless Officer Bob. I sometimes found myself deliberately crashing his patrol car just to see what he'd groan from the wreckage!

A must for Keystone Kop fans and manic depressives everywhere.

Nick Kelly

GRAPHICS:	8
SOUND:	9
TOUGHNESS:	9
ENDURANCE:	9
VALUE:	8
OVERALL:	9



TONY COTTEE PLAYS BUBBLE BOBBLE Blowing

Who better to play Bubble Bobble than a man who spends most of his time blowing bubbles and scoring barrowloads of goals. Tony Cottee come on down . . .

It's a funny old world, isn't it? I mean, there we were, sitting at our desks in *CU* Towers, wondering what on earth we could possible write about in our September issue.

"It's the start of the football season soon," observed Euge "The Axe-murderer" Lacey, "perhaps we should get some incredibly trendy young striker to play an arcade game". "But what incredibly trendy young striker could we get?" asked Ferdy "Bites Yer Legs" Hamilton.

"And what game could he possibly play?" I added, in my typically perceptive way.

"Well, sort it out yourselves", simpered Mike "Nobby" Pattenden, "*I'm* going off for a couple of weeks in the sun before the season starts. Anyway, there's only one team in the universe worth supporting, and that's West Ham, and *you* lot certainly don't have *any* chance of getting one of their incredibly trendy young strikers to play a game, because they're all much too busy."

And with a haughty wave *CU*'s hard man was gone. No sooner than the door had slammed, the Ed's Mickey Mouse phone rang.

"Hello, this is *CU*, home of the *CU* crew, what can we do for you?" rapped the cool Ed-man into Mickey's shoes.

"Oh, hello this is Mr A. Publicityperson from Firebird, and I was just calling to tell you that we're going to be bringing out a C64 conversion of that incredibly popular arcade game, *Bubble Bobble*, you know, the one with the dinosaurs and the bubbles and the hundred different screens, and we wondered if you'd like to come around to our offices and have a go on the spanking new *Bubble Bobble* arcade machine which we just had delivered . . ."

But before the Ed could reply a lilting Cockney voice came wafting through the window from the street outside:

"I'm forever blowing bubbles/ Pretty bubbles in the air . . ."

We all rushed over the the window and looked out. There we saw a trendy-looking young man in a maroon football top.

"Who are you, young man", asked the Ed. sternly, "and why are you singing that ridiculous song about bubbles?"

"Well, my name's Tony Cottee, and I'm an incredibly trendy young striker with West Ham, and the reason I'm singing this song is that it happens to be our club song, and the reason I'm wandering around these parts is that I'm bored and I'm looking for something to do . . ."

Ten minutes later a limo was



speeding us to Firebird's sumptuous West End skyscraper.

Tony Cottee is one of England's brightest young prospects. Aged just twenty-two, he was the third highest scorer in the league last season with a whopping twenty-nine, and has been West Ham's highest scorer for three of the past four seasons. As a nipper Tony's Dad and Grandad would bring him along to the teraces to watch The Hammers play, and when he left school six years ago he went straight to his favourite club. Within a year or so of his arrival at Upton Park Tony was holding down a first team place.

He's even played twice for England — but, so far, only as a substitute.

"Well, they all count", he says of his brace of caps, "but one of my main ambitions is obviously to play a full game for England. Starting off an international career would be a major achievment for me."

The main reason we haven't already seen lots of Tony resplendent in a white shirt seems to be that Blighty is currently rather spoilt for choice when it comes to first class goal-getters — with the likes of Gary Lineker and Clive Allen about, Tony's been a wee bit unlucky. But he's reasonably confident that sooner or later he's going to be a regular first-teamer.

"The good thing is that, because I'm only twenty-two I've sort of got a bit of time in hand. It's not like I'm twenty-six and worrying about time. But obviously time goes quickly so you've got to make the most of the opportunities you do get.

Other current ambitions include being the top goal scorer in the first-division and winning a trophy for West Ham.

When we get to talking about his spare-time activities, it soon becomes apparant that between actually playing football, and compiling his famous scrapbooks of each game he plays (his father started him off on this when he was twelve and now the Tony Cottee scrapbooks number sixty and rising), there's not much time left for doing anything very much. When he gets a chance he does have a go at most other sports, and mentions among his favourites tennis, swimming, snooker and golf. He's also a fan of soul music and has been known to attend the occasional Luther Vandros concert. And how

TC prepares to put another one away





Bubbles



about computer games, I hear y'all ask?

"Well, I've never bought a computer or anything like that. But if we went to a hotel or something before a game, and we had a bit of time on our hands, I'd always have a game if there was an arcade machine about. It's something I've always enjoyed doing, playing arcade games."

Favourite games include the likes of *Galaxian*, *Destroyers* and *Space Invaders*, many of which he got into while on holliers with his brother as a youthful sprog. Has he played *Kick 'N' Run*? Well, no, but he has had a bash at *World Cup*.

But enough idle chatter, methinks, and on with the game. *Bubble Bobble*, for those few of you who have not actually seen it in the flesh, is not exactly yer average spaceage shoot 'em up. No indeed, in *Bubble Bobble* our hero is a cute little dinosaur who, through some bizarre genetic accident is able to blow a stream of bubbles at his myriad foes. It's basically a platform game in which various little nasties come for you (the wee brontosaurus) and you have to disarm them by trapping them in a newly blown bubble. The baddies move down the screen, bouncing from platform to platform, and the bubbles float upwards. If you succeed in jumping into one of the bubbles with which you've already enveloped a baddy, it bursts and its contents fall to the ground, miraculously transformed into a tasty piece of fruit to be picked up. At various points other objects come dropping down the screen: some, like running shoes (which double your speed), bolts of lightning (which zap everything on the screen) and lumps of toffee (which give you extra lives), are definitely worth jumping into; others, like fireballs, should be avoided at all costs if you don't fancy being tipped head over heels and losing lives.

There are literally scores of different screens, each one with a different arrangement of platforms, and some with their own personalised nasties which require special attention. You can bounce up the screen on your own rising bubbles by keeping your finger on the fire button, and you can move very rapidly down again by hitching a ride on the occasional "waterfalls" which you trigger by bumping into certain mysterious objects. There's also a two player option, whereby you and a mate can cooperate in "bubbling" the enemy, and can still compete by seeing who manages to pick up the most points.

And so it was a confident back who stepped up to the machine, not expecting to be much troubled by his youthful opponent (*get on you're useless — MP*). Alas, it soon became clear that, even if he didn't get as much practise as yours truly at the art of game-playing, young Tony was a mean hand at blowing bubbles at small unpleasant creatures. He also had a talent for poaching — often I would capture a baddy, only for him to jump into the appropriate bubble and pick up the real points at my expense. Until you get to know the game really well, you're liable to be surprised from time to time by the unexpected effects of bumping into and inadvertently picking up certain objects.

At one point the cutesy fairground music is replaced by a huge crash and everything on the screen turns into a piece of fruit to be gobbled. How did ya do that Tone?

"I don't know", replies the sweating and mystified striker, "Every now and then something just happens. I just got an umbrella a minute ago, but I don't know how."

But whether or not Tony understands what he's doing, one thing is undoubted — I'm being trashed! C'mon, Tony, what's the secret? How come you're 158,600 and I'm a measely 40730? What are you doing that I'm not?

"I don't know, really", the modest footballer tells me, "You just really try to blow out as many bubbles as you can, and then hop into 'em for points. I'm starting to get the hang of it now. You need, I would say, about half an hour's practise on any machine, and you'll get used to it."

Dear, dear, all this excitement is too much for me (besides, I just *hate* being beaten). We take a break from the action, and Tony tells me about his plans for the future.

"Well, I'd love to go abroad to be honest, that's something I've always wanted to do."

What? Leave West Ham and Blighty? Where would you go?

"Well, I think I'd rather go to Italy. It pays well there, but it's not just a financial thing — there's just so many good players over there, y'know, people like Maradona and so on. I think it's the best league in the world, certainly the most difficult."

So the message seems to be, West Ham fans, see him while you can — he won't be here forever. Finally, I ask him to give me a verse of that song of songs, "*I'm forever blowing bubbles*", and he obliges. What a voice, Tony! Can we expect to see some Hoddle 'n' Waddle-style antics from you in due course?

"No, no, no, *certainly* not, I don't think I'll be doing anything like that!"

Not even if you were offered hundreds of thousands of pounds . . . ?

"Weeeelll . . . for *lots* of money, I might, you never know."

And, with a twinkle in his eye, this charming and talented goal-grabber hotfoots it.

Early morning. *CU* Towers. A bronzed Mike Pattenden strides into the empty office just back from his fortnight's "relaxation". What, no-one in yet?" he snarls. He flings his Gucci carrier bag into a distant corner, slumps into his chair and throws his flannel-clad legs up on the desk. "I wonder did those idiots do anything about getting an incredibly trendy young striker to play an arcade game?" From his blazer pocket he pulls a brand new West Ham season terrace ticket, and contemplates it.

"Nah . . . how could they? None of 'em know anything about soccer."

Arcades

Arcades

STREET FIGHTER

Capcom
(1 × £1)

In *Street Fighter* you play Ryu, a martial artist from the Orient. You are pitted against a series of other fighters from around the world, taking on each one on their own turf. It's the best of three falls, and, assuming Ryu defeats his opponent, he'll be presented with a fresh challenger with slightly different skills.

Doesn't sound that mind-boggling so far, does it? Just yer bog standard beat 'em up, right? Well, not really, actually. You see, though *Street Fighter*'s basic plot isn't the most strikingly imaginative in the world, it does have some most unusual features which make it worthy of note.

First, and foremost, there are the fighting contols. There's the standard left-right-crouch-jump joystick for movement all right, but when it comes to the punching and kicking controls, instead of the usual buttons there are two large rubber pads to be hit with the palms of your hands. By virtue of some fairly nifty technical hi-jinks, the harder you hit these pads, the harder Ryu hits his opponent. These pads make the game far closer, in terms of physical activity on the player's part, to real-life punching and kicking than measely plastic buttons ever could.

The second thing which makes *Street Fighter* pretty unusual is the sheer size of the screen, and, consequently, the size and graphic detailing of the players. If you imagine your average coin-op screen as a small portable television, this one is, by comparison, a 24 incher. It needs to be that way, too — otherwise the enormous fighting figures — measuring a whooping five inches in height — would look rather cramped.

The background graphics are pretty neat too. You get to choose the nationality of your first opponent, and the scene varies dramatically according to his home territory. In America, you take on a large white fighter on a railway platform somewhere in the New York district of Queens (how do I know? Because you can see the famous Manhattan skyline in the distant background, of course), and an even larger black warrior on some wasteland in the shadow of Mount Rushmore. In China, you'll be doing battle on a section of the Great Wall, in Japan, outside a Buddhist temple. And of you elect to take on the charmingly-named British punk, Birdie, your arena will be a scruffy alley whose main feature is an abandoned shop called Blockheads! (I knew we were famous for our street culture but. . .).

Yes, yes, all very interesting, sez you, but what's it like to play? Well, until you've put in a fair bit of practise (and coinage too — this game ain't cheap, you get three goes for a pound) chances are that before you even know what's going on, you'll be confronted with the finishing screen: a picture of your victorious opponent crowing: "You'll need a lot more practise before you can defeat me, kiddo".

But if you persevere — and have a sympathetic bank manager — you'll start to win the occasional round and, eventually, you may even work up the stamina to vanquish one of the fighters. "What strength!" your battered foe exclaims in mock admiration, "but remember, there are many other guys like you all over the world". And with that you'll find yourself on a plane to some other part of the globe where another tough guy awaits you.

There are also practice sequences where you can try your hands — and feet — at smashing concerete blocks and so forth, and there's a two-player option in which you and a friend can thrash away at one another.

Street Fighter isn't an easy game to play. The different warriors do seem to have slightly varying tactics and talents, but personally I found that one's own physcial stamina, or lack of the same, can be a limitation (*Wimp — Ed*). No doubt if you do weight-training or eat a keg or two of spinach per day, you'll soon overcome this drawback.

There's no denying that the rubber fighting pads and large screen in *Street Fighter* are interesting developments, and ones whch other games manufacturers will be keeping a keen eye on. And I'm pretty certain that these same features, and the excellent graphics, will initially attract a fair level of punter interest and cash.

What I'm not so sure about is whether the fairly repetitive nature of the game, and the large amount of physical effort needed to play it, will prevent *Street Fighter* from being much more than a novel experiment in coin-op technology. Only time will tell.

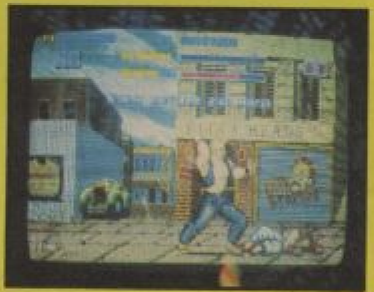
Nick Kelly



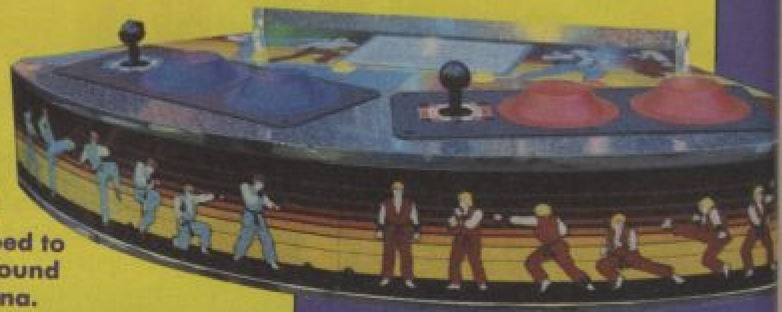
Challenged in the land of the rising sun.



Chopped to the ground in China.



Battered senseless in Great Britain . . .





. . . and annihilated in America!

GRAPHICS:	7
SOUND:	7
TOUGHNESS:	9
ENDURANCE:	6
VALUE:	5
OVERALL:	6

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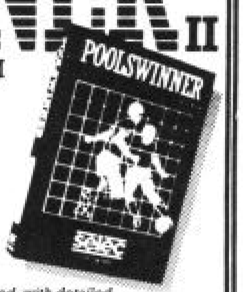
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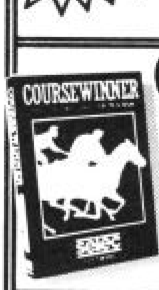
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It's not that *R-Type*, a horizontally scrolling spaceship-style shoot 'em up, embodies the most original coin-op game concept ever — it doesn't. It's just that what it does, it does so incredibly well.

The theme is sub-aquatic warfare. You're a lone fighting machine making your way through an alien seascape. You've got two basic weapons, both operated by your fire button: stab it and you get normal rapid fire, keep your digit on for fractionally longer and a single, far more powerful missile is launched.

Waves of smaller attacking ships and stationary gun emplacements fire at you as you negotiate this graphically stunning world. Interspersed with these routine hazards are larger and more resilient sea creatures, mutant lobsters who blow balls of lava at you, enormous segmented sea snakes, and various other hideous semi-fossiled nasties.

You will also encounter an occasional slow moving, bubble-headed creature which doesn't fire at you. These surprisingly peaceable inhabitants of the nightmare world in which you find yourself are the keys to a longer and healthier existence. Shoot one of these and, where once was a relatively harmless sea-being, you will now see a glittering jewel. Ride through this gem and you will suddenly find yourself accompanied by a rotating, missile-firing globe.



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If you manage to survive long enough to pick up a second jewel, you'll be given another weapon or protective device on your own ship, and each jewel after that adds one more piece of firepower or protection.

As you glide through the first level, you'll find the extra weapons you've acquired very useful, especially when it comes to dealing with the bigger, tougher monsters who have to be blasted several times before they'll die. But it's at the very end of the level that your gem-power becomes essential to your survival.

For each level is guarded by what must be one of the most loathsome and graphically complex monsters captured in an arcade game yet.

First you'll encounter a horrific squid-like creature with waving death-dealing tentacles and huge, baleful marble eyes. Every time it opens its maw, a lethal chain of fire is spat out at you. After about three pounds worth of ten pees, I've came to one conclusion: the only way to dispose of this horrible creature is to first acquire the rotating sphere. Even if you are fighting with an ally, it's still pretty tough going, trying to dodge the fire while blasting away at the vulnerable eyes.

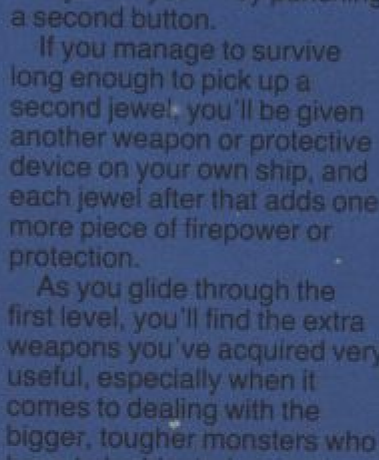
Assuming that you do have the sphere to help you, and preferably some extra firepower as well, as you keep blasting at the monster you'll start to notice parts of it withering up. Eventually, if you do manage to overcome it, you'll be treated to an amazing death throes scene, in which a series of explosions erupt all over it's slimey body before it finally expires and slides out of sight.

As you progress through the levels, the scenery changes in colour and character, sombre blue hues being replaced by brilliant red ones, metallic tubing giving way to a seabed covered in the fossilised-bones of fiercesome, long-dead creatures, and so on. The creatures who attack you are endlessly varied too, from giant crayfish which leap unexpectedly up at your craft from their camouflaged hiding places to sea-spiders who race across the screen sowing a web of deadly seaweed in your path.

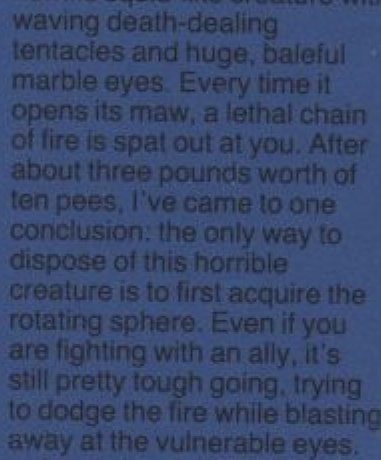
The great monsters at the ends of the level are each totally unique. At the end of Level Two, you encounter an enormous putrifying sea anenome-type beast with giant sea-worms swimming in and out of its many orifaces. The Level Three Supreme Nasty really resembles nothing so much as a giagantic irregularly-shaped star-ship, with hundreds of weapon bays and pods. The trick when dealing with these horrors is to nimbly place your accompanying sphere in one really hot spot and leave it to deal with all the weapons there, while you move onto another.

I could go on, but by now you must be getting the idea — this is one hell of a game. But please don't take my word for it. No doubt every arcade in the country, including your own local, will soon have it's own *R-Type*. And, unfortunately, its own *R-Type* size crowds too.

How do I get out of this one?



And what the hell is *that*?



GRAPHICS:	10
SOUND:	8
TOUGHNESS:	10
ENDURANCE:	9
VALUE:	9
OVERALL:	9



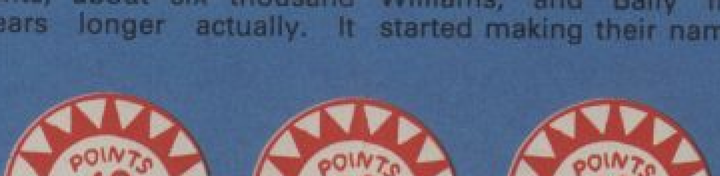
Pinball is back with a rush of mega-machines. Ferdy 'Head case' Hamilton checks the latest tables, talks to the real life pinball wizards, and tells you how to buy your own for less than the price of a 64.

Flippin' 'eck!

IN THE BEGINNING . . .

Before you rapidly stuff another 30p in the latest laser all-singing-and-dancing arcade machine, stop and think "was there life before arcade games?" Then look over in the murkiest, dustiest corner of your local arcade, and you will probably notice a severely neglected pinball machine. Pinball, y'see, was probably your parents idea of fun — at least until they had you!

Pinball has been around a little longer than your parents, about six thousand years longer actually. It started with the ancient Greeks, who used to entertain themselves by rolling balls up hills and attempting to get them into holes which they had dug.



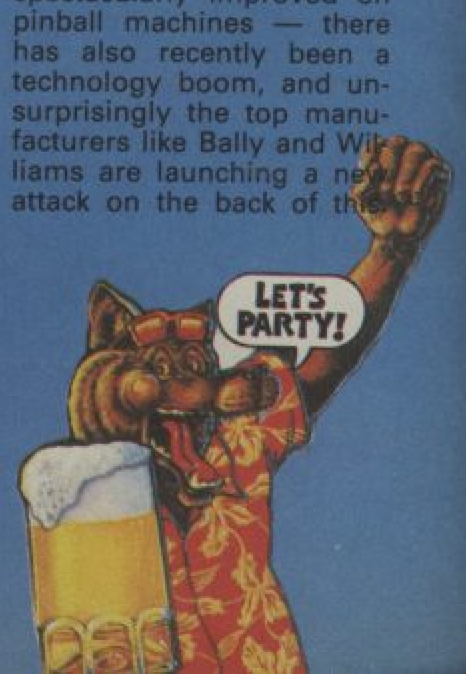
Pinball commercially took off in around 1927. Well, it wasn't exactly pinball as we know it today. The game around then was known as bagatelle. Bagatelle was similar to pinball in that it had the table shape and a plunger. The object was to send the ball skillfully into the playing area in such a way that it would land in one of the scoring holes. Each hole had a different score and there were pins strategically placed to obstruct the ball's course.

Today's big pinball manufacturers such as Gottlieb, Williams, and Bally first started making their names when bagatelle began to be found in every place the public could possibly gather. It wasn't until after the war, in 1947 to be precise, that Gottlieb's 'Humpty Dumpty' machine was produced with flippers. Since then, well . . . the rest, as they say, is history.

Pinball has now come a long, long way from the days when all a machine had to offer was pretty pictures on the back, a few bumpers, a plunger and two flippers. Pinball machines, like computer games, have picked up their share of famous licences. In the 70s pinball in Britain was at its most popular due to the amazing success of The Who's rock opera 'Tommy'. There were two machines inspired by the film, *Captain Fantastic*, starring Elton John in the notorious six foot high Dr. Marten's boots, and *Wizard* starring Roger Daltry as "That deaf, dumb and blind kid . . ." who "sure plays mean pinball." A lot of other rock bands also had the honour of being plastered all over the backflash of pinball machines, notably Kiss and Iron Maiden. In fact almost anyone who's anyone, from Flash Gordon to the Harlem Globe Trotters, can be found with their name on a pinball machine.



Not only has the artwork spectacularly improved on pinball machines — there has also recently been a technology boom, and unsurprisingly the top manufacturers like Bally and Williams are launching a new attack on the back of this





▲ *Alien Poker — v. cult 'n' trendy pin table.*

Pinball flips back



The new wave of games are excellent, spear-headed by Bally's *Party Animal*. This game in particular is absolutely mind- (and ear-) blowing. I say ear-blowing because of the sound: it puts the best of video games to shame.

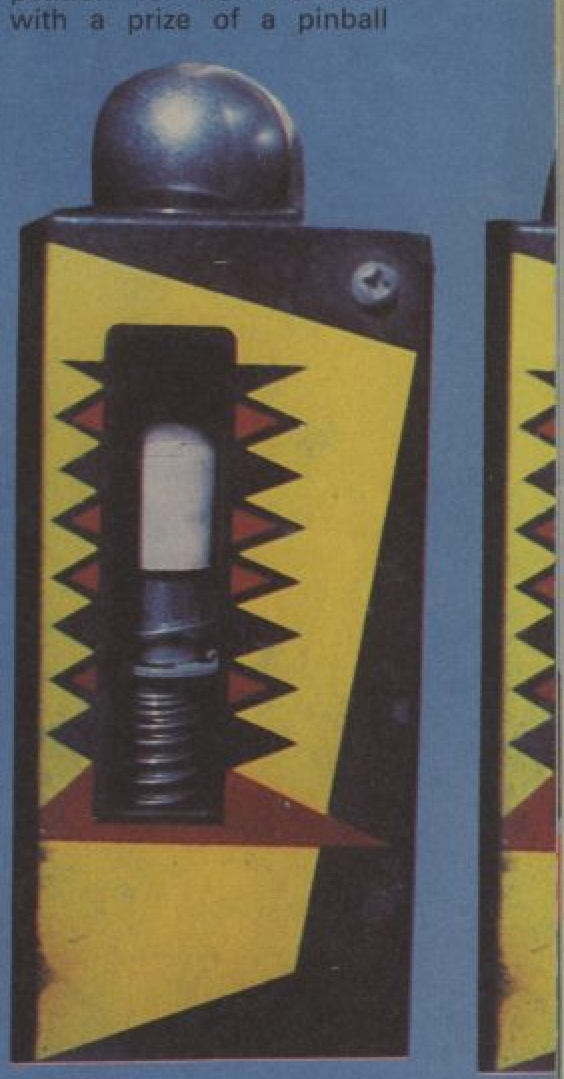
The game is set to a party theme, and has a mini-replica Wurlitzer jukebox in the middle of the playfield. Not only does this jukebox look excellent — it actually works! Each time you hit the thing a Sixties tune is blasted out in perfect stereo, hit it again and you will hear the brief sound of a record being ripped off the turntable, and then a new one being put on. The famous golden oldies include 'Louie, Louie' and 'Tequila'. The machine, as well as being extremely brilliant sound-wise, is also very funny. When you knock down the tokens and spell P.I.G-.O.U.T. — at this point an all too realistic burp sound is heard.

So why am I telling you all this, you wonder, everyone knows there are only about four pinball machines to be found in arcades across Britain, and most of those are broken. Well, believe it or not, you can now pick up a working, second-hand, electronic, full-size, no catches, pinball machine for anything between £100 and £350 (The price depending on what kind of condition it's in and how new it is.) Where? That's what we wanted to find out, and our journey led us to Ilford in Essex where the home of the Pinball Owners Association is to be found. We spoke to their chairman, Mr Gary Flower.

The association has been going now for 11 years and has a few thousand members worldwide. I asked what joining the association can do for someone who wants to get into pinball in a big way. "They could buy a machine through us and our monthly magazine. Buying through the P.O.A. would ensure the machine was being sold for a fair price. Also by joining the P.O.A. you can swap pintables when you have exhausted play on your own. The association is also there for people to share their knowledge of pinball at their monthly gatherings in London. Not to mention the fact that if you have maintenance trouble with your machine you may be able to find someone only too pleased to assist."

One or two very good reasons, I think you may agree. "But there must be a catch!" I hear you say. I thought the same too, but no, it doesn't cost an arm and a leg to join, in fact it only costs £7.50 (address at the end of the feature).

The P.O.A. also holds an annual competition called 'The Pinball Wizard'. Which M.E.N.S.A. members will probably have deduced is a pinball tournament for P.O.A. members. It is an annual competition, held every October for the title of 'Pinball Wizard' (or in more mundane terms world champion, as that is what in fact the holder becomes). This year there's also a competition for non-members with a prize of a pinball





Ferdy's Guide to Pinball Speak

I don't know, what with all these pinball terms flying left, right and centre, I though I'd better explain what they were, and introduce you to a few more. It's a dead good way to impress your mates when you're next down the arcade.

BUMPERS — The round things usually found at the top of the play area. They bounce your ball all over the place.

PLUNGER — The spring-loaded trigger which shoots the ball into play.

FLIPPERS — Come on! These are the things you play the ball with.

BIFFING or GRAUNCHING — Nudging the machine with any part of your bod, to help control the ball (perfectly legal).

BODY ENGLISH — A more involved session of biffing or graunching (again perfectly legal).

TILTING — Biffing the machine too hard — a wall light will show up and your flippers will be put out of use temporarily (totally illegal).

LAZARUS BALL — When a ball goes behind the flippers and out of play, a player can attempt to biff the machine and bring it back into play. Those of you who are regular Bible bashers will understand the name. For those of you who don't, Lazarus came back from the dead . . . geddit?

ANTI-BIFF BARS — These were put strategically behind the flippers by the designers to stop players doing the Lazarus balls and are now in common use.

BACK FLASH — scoreboard.

TOP FLIGHT WIZARD — Ace player.


GAME OVER
DINAMIC
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L.ROYO
When you decide to embark on this adventure you will face KAIKAS (mutating kangaroos), ORCOS (fierce monsters of the planet DEDRON), LEISER-FREISERS (autonomous search androids, equipped with telescopic cameras and turbo-laser cannon), GARKLAS CLONICOS (specialists in following trails through the swamp jungle) . . . a world full of dangers.
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Flippin' 'eck!





machine, so get in touch with the P.O.A. if you fancy your chances as a Tommy.

While Euge and Mike were busy at the arcade trying to actually hit the ball with the flippers, and Nick was at the studio with T.F.L.S. trying desperately to do a decent cover version of Reg Swight's pinball anthem — I thought I'd talk to a real-life pinball wizard: please welcome on these prestigious pages, the one and only, World No. 1, Deadly Dave Dutton (sounds of lots of little 16-year-old girls screaming and crying).

Dave, how long have you been playing pinball? (v. boring interviewer's question).

"About 20 years, Ferdy. Since I was eight.

Who did you have to beat in the final to become number one?

"My girlfriend."

Pardon (look of surprise on Ferdy's face, he has finally gone quiet. But how long can this last?).

"My girlfriend."

Did you meet her through pinball?

"No. We knew each other before, but pinball has certainly been a shared interest together."

How long have you been world cham, Wiz? May I call you Wiz? (extreme grovelling tone of voice).

"Since last October, although I did win it before in around '83. But in those days it wasn't world champ because it wasn't as international as it is now."

Has all this fame and fortune changed your life? Are you sponsored by Bally and Williams? Are you a millionaire? Can I borrow your Rolex?

"No, I'm not a millionaire, hell, I'm not even sponsored yet. Although I have been on T.V. and in the papers and basically I've had a lot of media attention."

Have you got any tips for our enthusiastic readers?

"The best one is never take your eye off of the ball, not even to look up at the score, and user the flippers separately, don't think of them as one."

Thank you Wiz. Now how do you fancy your chances this year, in particular againt your chairman and former wizard Gary Flower?

"Well, modestly speaking, Ferdy, Gary's the one with the knowledge, I'm the one with the skill."

Phew!!! Well, by now you must all be getting the message: this pinball game sure is one heck of a faberoonie way to blow a few hours and ten pees.

So just why is it that finding an up-to-date, well-maintained pintable in this green and pleasant land is like attempting to complete *Impossible Mission* with a single life (i.e. well-nigh impossible)?

Well, for one thing, some rather daft legal wording means that the law sees pintables as "games of chance" (which means that they are treated in much the same way as fruit machines) as opposed to "games of skill". The variety of financial and other hassles that this provision causes tends to discourage arcade owners from keeping pintables.

And, for another, pintables tend to need far more routine maintenance than yer average games machine, and most arcade owners simply can't be bothered to give these sensitive machines the care they require.

But while such factors have served to push the noble sport of pinball out of the Britain's coin-op limelight from time to time, the sheer physical man-against-machine thrill of the pintable, unreproducable on even the most sophisticated computer game, means that pinball is always assured of an enormous cult following. And what with the current return to vogue of Wurlitzer jukeboxes, antique cadillacs and James Dean moves, we have a sneaking suspicion that this most enduring of designer pastimes may be due for a revival. Remember. You read it here first . . .

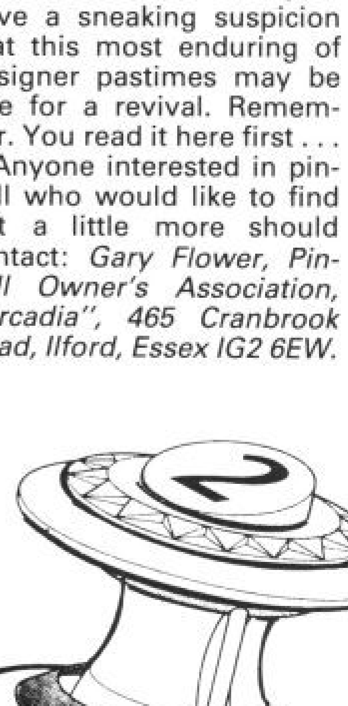
Anyone interested in pinball who would like to find out a little more should contact: *Gary Flower, Pinball Owner's Association, "Arcadia", 465 Cranbrook Road, Ilford, Essex IG2 6EW.*

POINTS 10 WHEN LIT — POINTS 10 WHEN LIT — POINTS 10 WHEN LIT

TEN THINGS YOU NEVER REALLY WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT PINBALL AND NEVER BOTHERED TO ASK.

1. ***Best selling Bally/Midway Machine of all time:*** **Eight Ball Pinball Deluxe.**
2. ***Famous pinball fanatics:*** **Bruce Springsteen, Abraham Lincoln, Elton John's Mum, Pete Townsend.**
3. ***Pinball machine in Ali's Cafe in EastEnders:*** **Warlock by Williams.**
4. ***First pinball with flippers:*** **Gottlieb's Humpty Dumpty, 1947.**
5. ***Bands with pinball machines dedicated to them:*** **Kiss, Iron Maiden, Genesis.**
6. ***Pinball games for the 64:*** **Pinball Construction Set, Raster Blaster, Slam Ball.**
7. ***CU team's favourite pinball machine:*** **Party Animal by Bally.**
8. ***Pinball machines based on coin-ops:*** **Ms Pacman, Defender.**
9. ***Pinball bearing dimensions:*** **1 1/16 of an inch diameter — have been measured at speeds in excess of 200 miles an hour.**
10. ***Best selling Williams machine of all time:*** **High Speed.**

POINTS 10 WHEN LIT — POINTS 10 WHEN LIT — POINTS 10 WHEN LIT



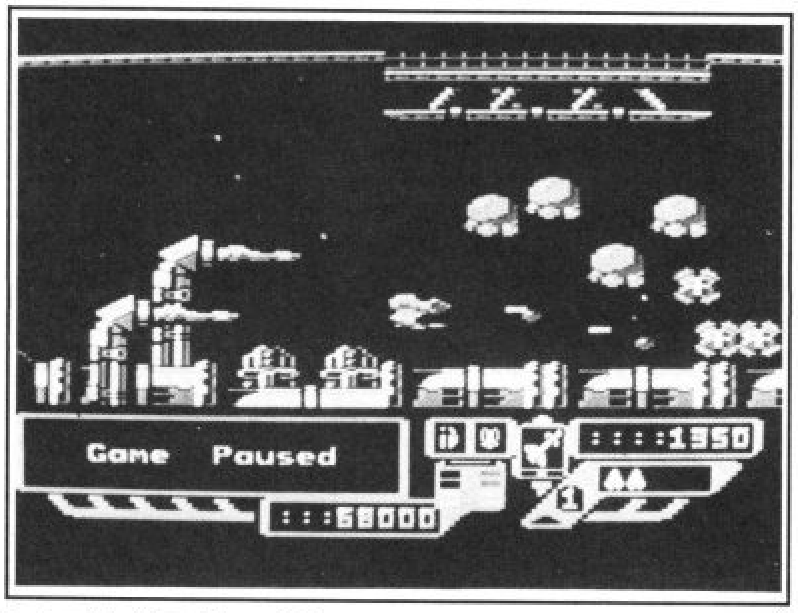
PLAY TO WIN

Zynapse borrows a hell of a lot from recent coin-op shoot 'em ups — but despite its lack of originality it certainly is a lively blast. Mark Patterson and the Ed got hooked as soon as it arrived. Now we are pleased to present our exclusive blow by blow — screen by screen — guide to this excellent game. Coded by two of Hewson's new recruits — John Cumming and Dominic Robinson — we rate it as the best shoot 'em up of '87 — so there.

Zynaps

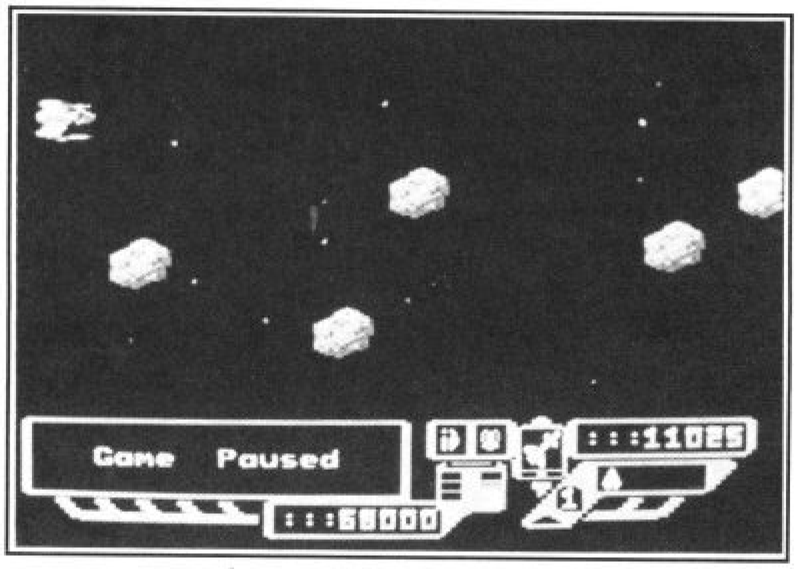
LEVEL 1

Fly close to ground level to destroy these as they fire homing bullets:



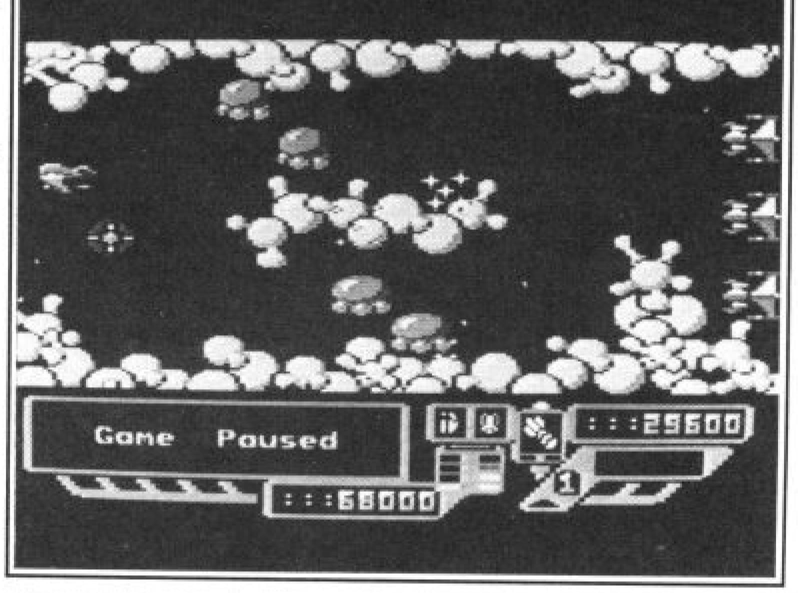
LEVEL 2

At the section where the asteroids are coming at you it is extremely helpful to have two speeds — any more and the ship will move too fast for careful, tight moves.



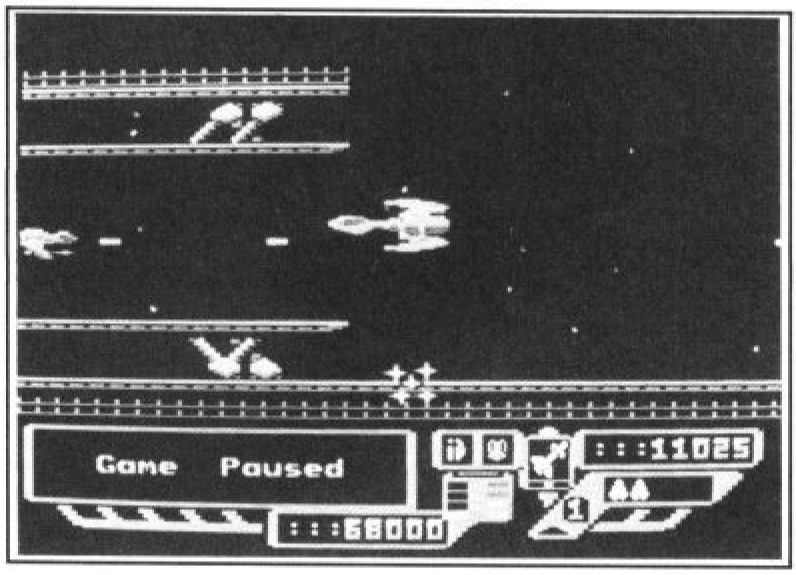
LEVEL 3

First things first. Don't let any alien get further than the half-way mark on this screen, 'cause when it comes to close range blasting it's almost impossible as platforms get in the way.



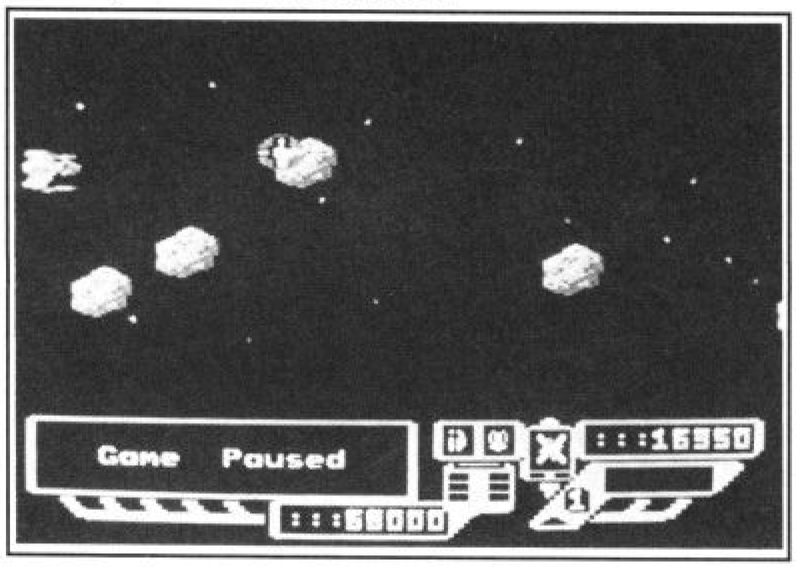
SEND YOUR POKES TIPS + MAPS TO: PLAY TO WIN C.U. PRIORY COURT 30-32 FARRINGDON LANE EC1R 3AU

End of level ship calls for a use of tactics. When this one flies back you fly forward, and when if comes forward you fly back. This should give you plenty of time to avoid its bullets.

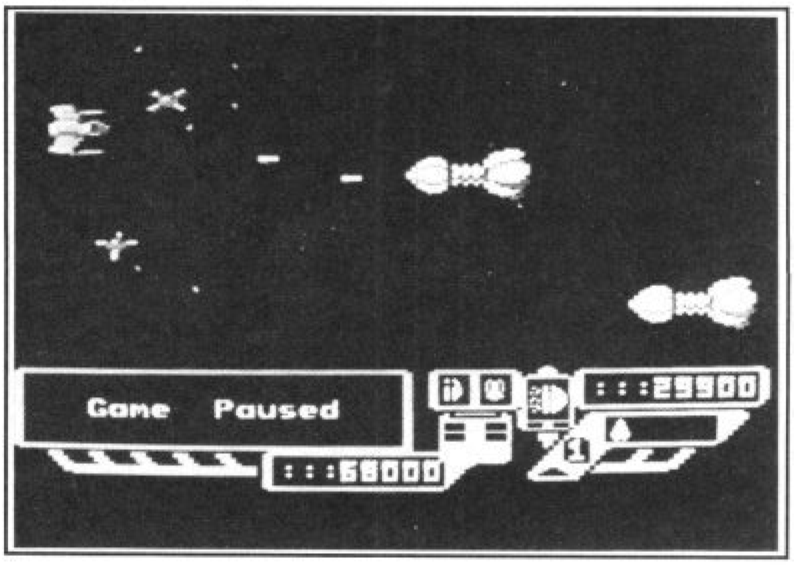


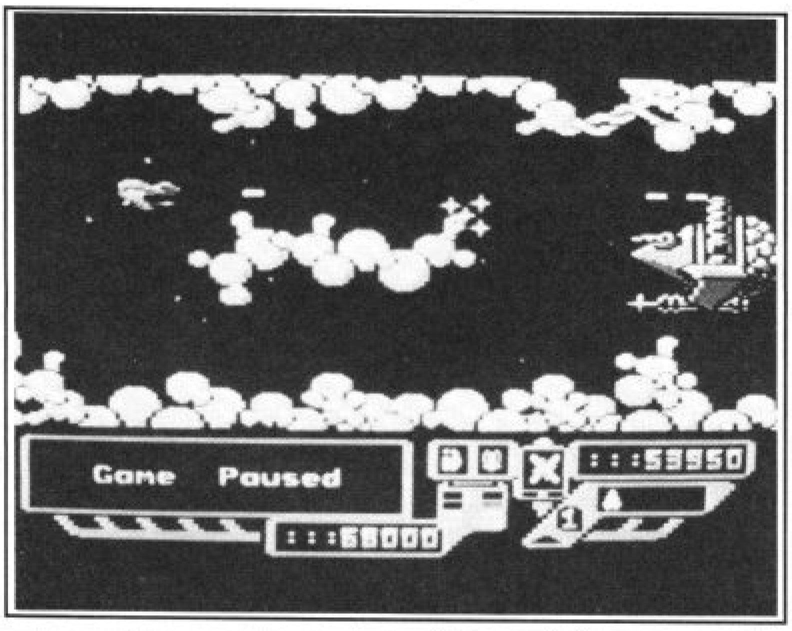


When an attack wave has been destroyed don't always go for the pod if you are fairly far away from it, as more than likely an asteroid will hit you at breakneck speed.



The ships at the end of the level here are not too hard as you have a lot of space to move around in. You have the added bonus that they only move up and down.





The end of chapter guardian can only be described as a Walkman wearing duckbilled platypuss with its brains hanging out of its bum. Also if you keep your ship in the shown position the guardian can't hit you.

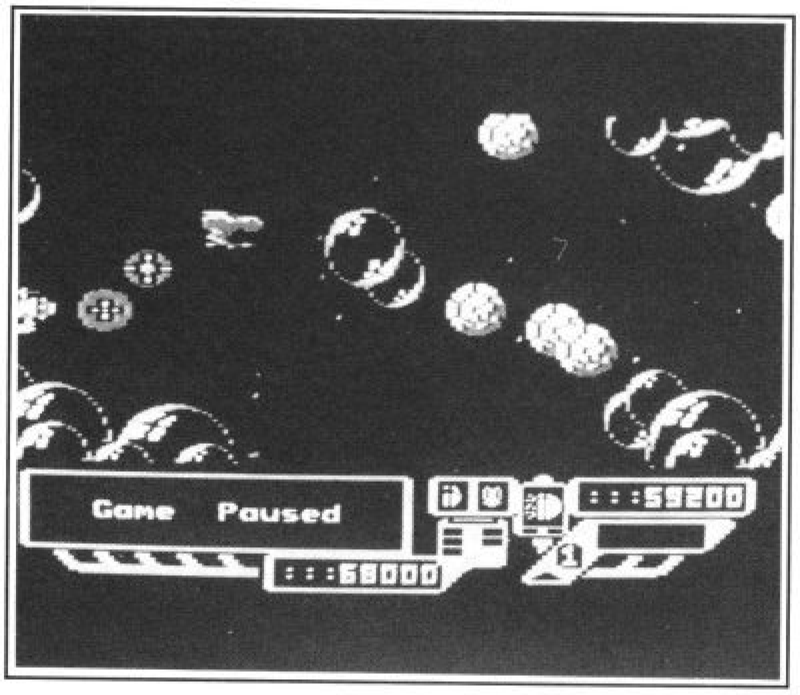
GU PLAY TO WIN

Zynaps

Play to Win Zynaps

LEVEL 4

Dodge the bubbles, shoot the rocks. If you fly over the rocks your almost certain to tne up facing a terminal hernia.



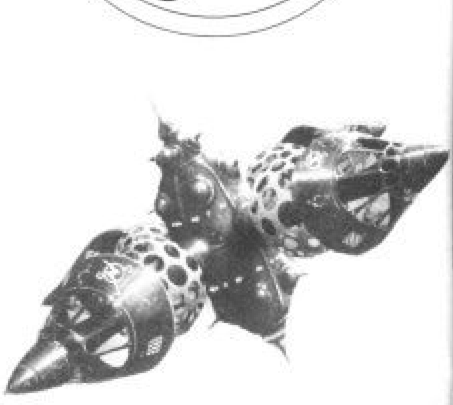
GENERAL TIPS

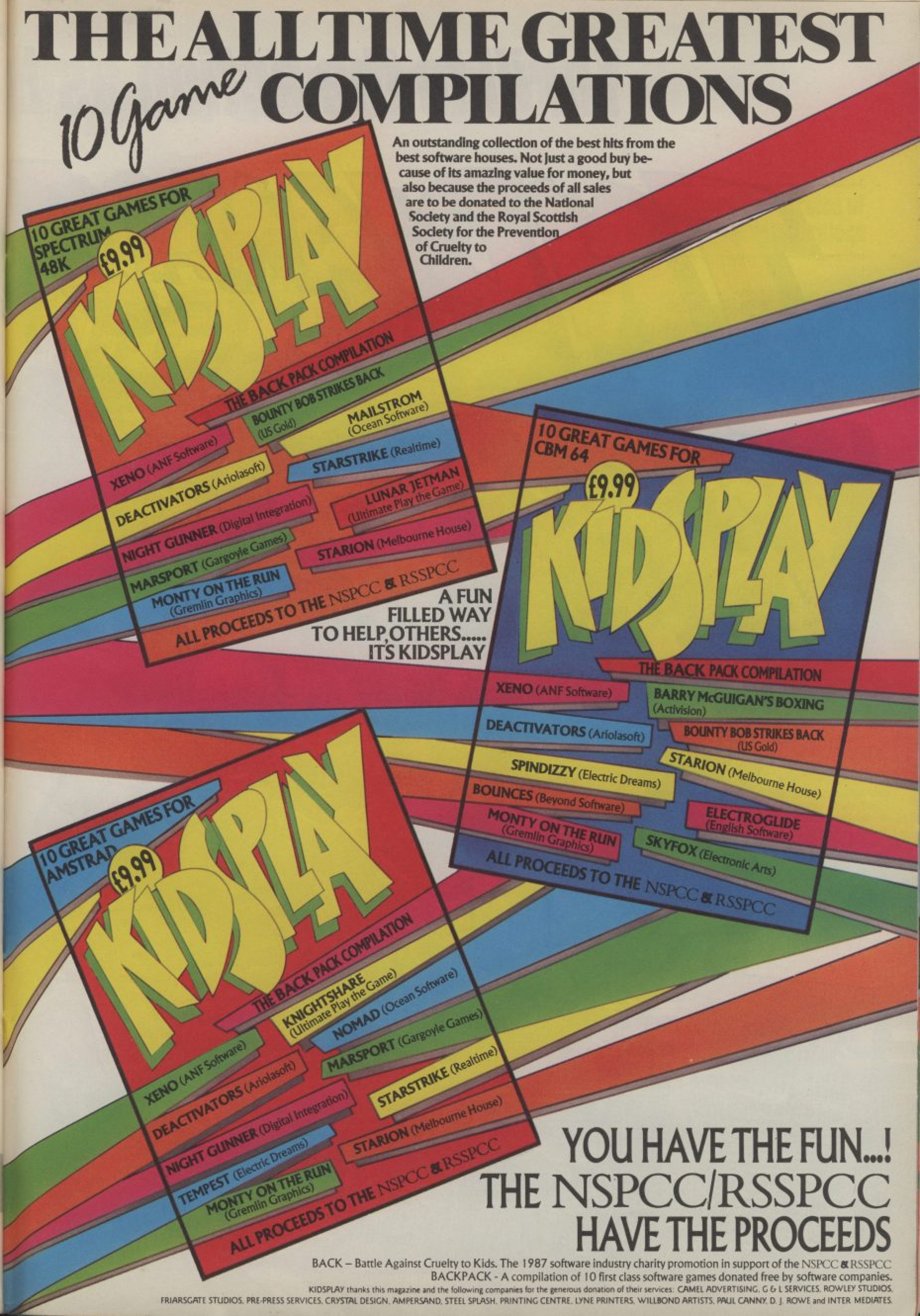
The natural rule for this game and the others in its class is: if it moves let it eat photon death; if it doesn't move, let it eat photon death anyway. On level 1 try not to move about too much. For the guardian on level three use the seeker missiiles (you know, the ones with the sights). The homing missiles are the best on all the levels in the first chapter. Though they are essential on level one. Try not to look at how many men you've got, just keep blasting — you get your extra every 10,000.



That's it. All programmers John Cumming (left) and Dominic Robinson (right) will say is "keep on the move and build your fire power". Thanks guys — really helpful.

MARK PATTERSON & THE ED.




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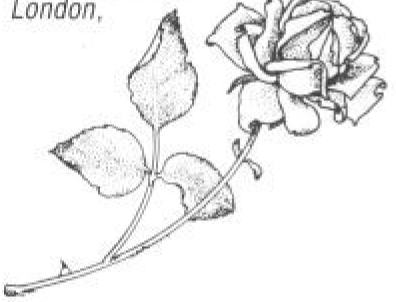
Letters

Weirdo hippy

Really loved the Zodiac Mindwarp piece. It was, well — totally spaced out. As a sixteen year old grebo hippy I don't find much in the games scene to turn me on these days. Ok, ok. Wizball was totally amazing — but what's happened to Minter. I miss all that Llama business and Sheep in Space.

Just one bummer though. Why all the mentions of football teams. I mean, it's, like, such a violent game.

Stay Cool,
Christine Cawley
London,



Nipples

The obscene picture of a right nipple is the last few issues of CU has spurred me to write this letter of complaint. You know what I'm talking about. The advert for "Game Over" that has appeared in most of the other software mags.

Don't say that the company didn't approach you. Getting an ad in CU is the key to a successful promotion. You didn't print it because you thought it would offend some of the readers. Well, if something as trivial as that can be called offensive by a reader then either the offended reader is a very immature someone who believes that the presence of a right nipple in a computer magazine will turn all its readers into mass rapists or someone who believes that the nipple is "rude" and is of great mystical . . . . mystery like the belly button. I support none of these views as I'm not a perv (honest!) and because seeing a nipple isn't really an earth shattering event in my life.

Anyway there you have it. Usually I'm quite an ordinary boring sort of a guy who likes nothing better then to have a tea party on the lawn with my teddies. It's just that I haven't been taking my tablets recently. . .

J. Rahit

We didn't withdraw the Game Over advert. But it has to be said that it was pretty cheap.

Grand cock-up

It is not often that I find myself complaining, even if only to colleagues, about reviews that our products receive in the press. Freedom of opinion is crucial to a healthy industry, etc, etc. In fact, even when a Commodore User review started with the comment 'Oh no, not another duffer from Firebird' (the review proved to be broadly favourable), I maintained my usual equanimity.

But not this time.

In your published review of *Revs+* (CU July, page 25) your reviewer, one Mike Pattenden, has cocked things up in a major way. The tenor of his review is that, whatever else the game may be, it is, and always has been, unplayable. I would never disagree that *Revs* was difficult (I was useless at it), but for Mike to imagine that we left a lot of the problems untouched when we produced the improved version suggests that he didn't bother to read the instructions. I quote:

"In the instructions Firebiard boast they have corrected this problem, but you still have to change up and down and throttle using the keyboard" — CU.

"Use joystick up/down to accelerate/brake, Up and Fire to change gears up, otherwise, Fire changes gears down." Revs+ instructions, page 4.

". . . this is blindingly difficult to steer . . . your (view) of the track is so restricted that you simply can't tell what's coming up and when to change down." CU.

When To Brake . . . Use markers for brake and gear points. There are three markers at intervals of 100 metres before each bend . . ." Revs+ instructions, page 9.

So, after all this, I have to call foul when the summary reads as follows:

". . . "it's still frustratingly unplayable and all the nice packaging . . . can't disguise that. Firebird still can't see the wood from the engine transmission.

The thing that really disappoints me is that such an error should have come from Commodore User, where there is usually great attention to detail, and a lot of pride taken in the publishing of an excellent magazine.

Tom Watson
Marketing Manager,
Firebird

I stand corrected on two points here. My *Revs* review was written from rather poorly photocopied instructions. Nevertheless, whilst I accept there are gaffs in the review, the basic tenet remains the same. *Revs Plus* is still an astoundingly difficult and unrewarding game to play. You've concentrated on the wrong things again — *despite* correcting some of the major drawbacks in the original. This view is backed up by other CU reviewers who have played the game. Basically it required a much greater overhaul than it received.

Star Letter

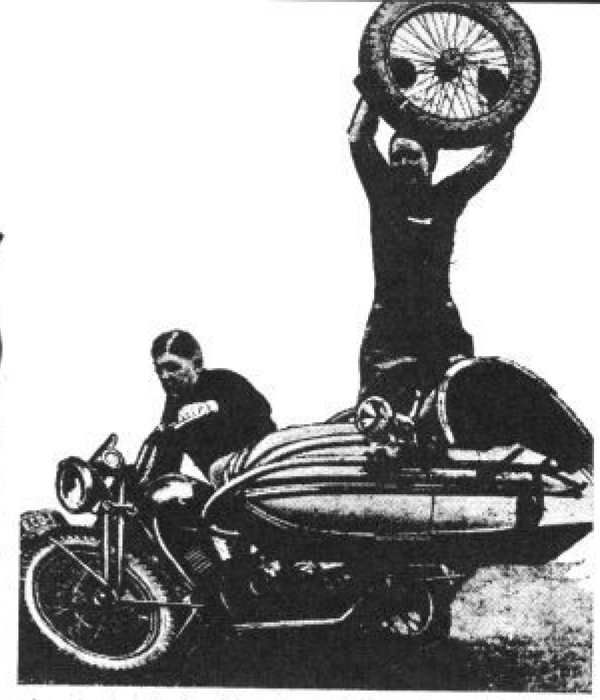
Softspeak update

I read your Softspeak piece with much jollity and amusement and so decided to do one of my own. Here it is, SoftSpeak 2 — The Sequel.

Prices to be announced:
The Speccy version's two quid cheaper.
Available soon:
Don't hold your breath.
System 3 are doing it:
Definitely don't hold your breath.
It's a Film Tie-in:
Oh dear.
It's a TV tie-in:
Oh dear, oh dear.
Screen-shots may vary:
They're from the coin-op.
Screen-shots from Arcade version:
Our own graphics are woefully abysmal.
We've got the exclusive rights:
No-one else would touch it.
Keyboard only:
It's virtually unplayable.
Paddles only:
It's completely unplayable.
It features aliens:
It's a shoot 'em up.
It features elves:
It's an adventure.
It's got a 15 rating:
It'll sell millions despite it being crap.
I wrote it with the Quill:
I can't use a computer.
It's got 68,000 screens:
It is mind-numbingly tedious.
It's got Lenslok protection:
You'll never be able to play the game.
It beats every gamer we've tested on it:
We tested it once.
Jeff Minter's doing it:
It's a shoot 'em up.
I'm moving on to pastures new:
I've been sacked.
Epyx are working on a secret project:
It's a sports sim.
It's a disk multi-load:
Aaaaaaargh!
It's a tape multi-load:
Aaaaaaaaaaaaaaargh!!!!!!
It's 99.5% Hacker proof:
Press run-stop.
We did a lot of preliminary research:
We looked in the dictionary for a title.
Software for sale:
I am a pirate.
ZX81 Software for sale:
I am a pirate deluding myself.
I am a Dragon 32 user:
Ignore me.
I am an Oric user:
Laugh at me, then ignore me.
I am a ZX80 user:
Shoot me.
Simon Kavanagh
London E9

Letters, Commodore User, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU.

Letters



Sexploitation

I agree with Miss July, Sara Erlington although there's nothing more impressive than the female form (except perhaps *Wizball* I jest . . .) I agree you don't need 'em to attract readers — a point which I could perhaps make to the perpetrators of the naff adverts for *Barbarian*, *Renegade*, *Game Over* and even *Defender of the Crown!* GRAPHICS SELL GAMES you morons, not sex fantasies. Sure, they caught my eye, but I'm not going to buy the games . . . except perhaps *Defender* 'cause I've seen the screen shots. Wise up, cretins.

Last point, 'computer violence' doesn't breed streetcrime — that's a combination of many causes; lack of conscience mainly — and I don't profess to know how to cure it even if I did enjoy Death Wish Nos. 1-373! Sprite bashers do all right . . don't mess with 'em! If I had Kids I'd give them gametime 'cause I'd know at least they weren't out housebreaking. I'd still keep an eye on them in arcades though . . too many dodgy geezers on the loose nowadays.

Mick Clitherow.
Plymouth

Spot on

Sara soap

After reading the letter from Sara Erlington I totally agree with here. Your mag should not be spoilt with naked ladies, there's a time and place for that and it's not inside your fab mag. And tell Sara not to get off her soap box she should stay there and take the praise (could this be true love — hope so). If Sara wants fun she can have it.

Do I get to have Sara Erlington's address as a pen pal and do I get a CU (Jimmy) T-shirt?

David Walker
Doncaster.

We asked Sara and she said absolutely not!' What a heartbreaker



Banker

I would just like to mention that I'm sick of all these people who write in complaining about how you reply to letters. If these wimps want a whole page of dull interllectual rubbish why don't they write to a bank?

Fil, Staffs

Margate missed!

I thought that your rundown of the best arcades in Great Britain was very well researched and informative, but I must question why you didn't visit Margate? As I live there I go to the arcades quite a lot, and the selection of coin-ops are excellent. I have been to most of the resorts that you reviewed and rate Margate's arcades the best of the lot. I hope you will do another arcade resorts review and this time include Margate. You will not be dissapointed.

P.S. The mag gets better every month. Keep it up lads.

J. Boyce
Margate,
Kent.

S'righton

I feel I must write in to complain about a letter printed in your July issue entitled "Bad Guts".

I suggest that Steve should visit an otpician as soon as possible. "Why?" I hear you cry. Well, poor Steve has a problem which I have diagnosed as one of the following: 1. He is either short-sighted or, 2. He couldn't give a monkey's about anyone else except himself.

Has Steve ever left his house in Port Elizabeth and ventured into a nearby township? No! Because if he had he would have seen the conditions that the majority of black people are forced to live in, (Yes, *forced*). Steve claims the black population is not as oppressed as they are made out to be. Of course they're not oppressed. They are only made to live in seperate areas and are given absolutely *CRAP* pay because the South African govt. thinks it would be *better* for them to live in such squalor.

He says the press and news coverage is exaggerated. The news and press give a clear and accurate picture of what is happening in South Africa, or at least they did until the govt. *restricted* them. The riots and clashes seen were *not* exaggerated at all unless it was a special 'news riot performance: - *starring*; the opressed blacks and the brutal and tactless police force. He says it is bad news that sells and not good. Well, to me, South Africa is bad news and I think I speak for many people when I say it would be a nice change, and most people would prefer it, if some good news came out of South Africa, although I personally can't see much hope of this in the near future (unless someone drops a bomb on the govt. buildings.)

The people who know the *true* facts about South Africa will *not* be sitting back and laughing, anything but. I suspect you Steve, and people like you, will be though. I realise that Steve can't be held responsible for the pathetic excuse of a government's actions, but the views demonstrated in your letter and previous letters like it make me wonder when the majority of the white population of S.A. is finally going to wake up to what is happening there.

Congrats: to Sara Erlington from Doncaster. Tut — Tut. Gary Scott. Well done C.U. for a great mag. In reply to Ernest. E. Quinch, *"'S-right!"*

Neil White,
Edinburgh

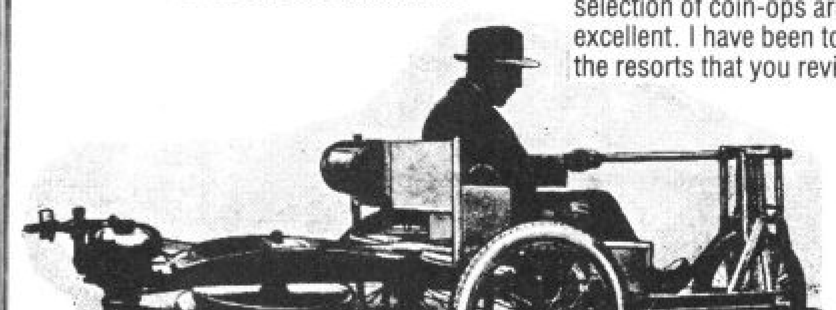
All good points, like, well made. Maybe the ANC could use a thermo nucleur bazooka in their armoury?

Bored with politics

I refer to a series of leters I have been reading about racism in South Africa. Please, Please, stop arguing over peoples rights in different parts of the world. I buy this magazine to read about computer games and what's happening in the computer industry, and I really enjoy reading it. But when you start arguing over blacks and whites I think many readers would agree ITS GONE TOO FAR.

Apart from that the magazine is great stuff to read.

Andrew Poole.



Eyemouth, Scotland
Do you want us to stop what is a healthy debate and drone on about interfaces instead? We don't write the letters (honest!) you do.

Superior

Who pays Ken McMahon's wages, Tynesoft or Commodore User?

On his recommendation my sons went out and bought Tynesoft's *Battlestar* at £7-95 of hard saved pocket money.

My 13-year olds reply to what he thought of it is not printable even in your mag'. The ten year old wanted to know if he could get his money back "Rubbish" is what he called it. Games they have payed £1-99 for, are far superior entertainment.
Mrs L.A. Winsor
Ken's reply when he saw this was unprintable! The idea of Ken and Tynesoft being in cahoots is laughable. Did you know the Geordie software house put out a contract on him for his unfavourable reviews!

Shortest letter

Shortest?
J R Brown
Leicester
Nope!

Nice Try D. Machin, Rotherham
Alan Russel
Hartlepool

Shorter Dave
Naz,
Manchester
Better, but you could all be more brief next time?

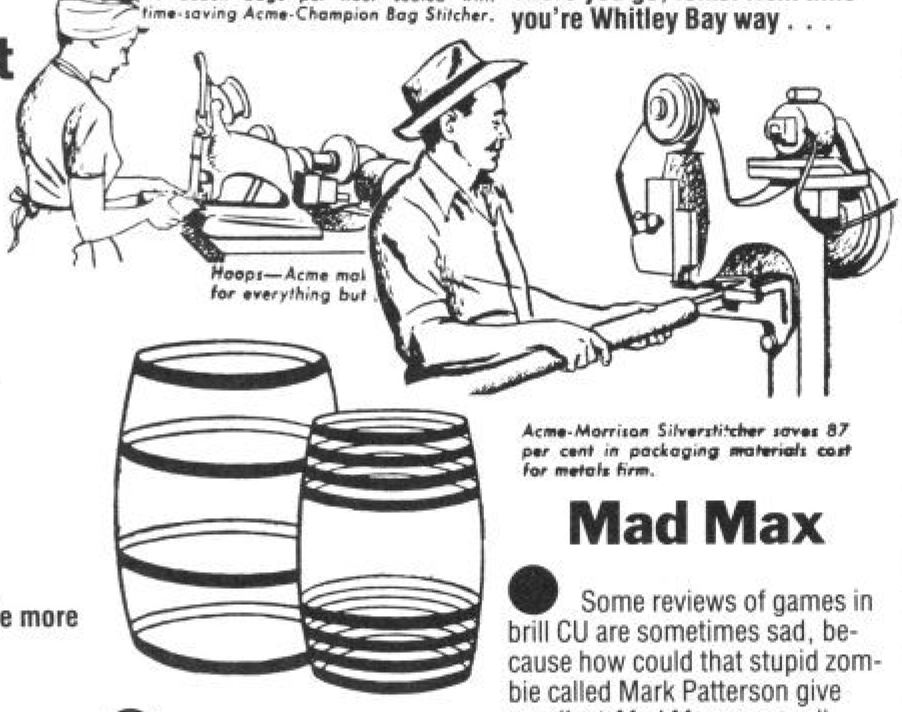
Hi-Bye! Done it!!!
Sam Barber
Dingwall Scotland
Oh, no you haven't.

!
Gordon Houghton,
Blackburn
Succinctness itself, well done! This correspondence is now closed.

ACME answer

Eugene Lacey, when reviewing the game '*Roadrunner*' said " . . . the first person to write in and tell me what ACME stands for can have my review copy . . ." Well here it is Eugene, ACME does not stand for anything, but as a matter of fact it is actually a word meaning the pinicle of perfection, the best. So Eugene if I'm the first to write in and tell you this, can I have the 64 tape version please!
Alan Hudsmith
Billingham, Cleveland
No.

In the review of Road Runner you asked what ACME meant and the first person to explain what it means gets the review copy of Road Runner. Well I know what it means. ACME means 'best quality' e.g. ACME bird seed would mean best quality bird seed. So there you go!



Cellophane bags of Brussels sprouts—49 dozen bags per hour sealed with time-saving Acme-Champion Bag Stitcher.

Hoops—Acme mak for everything but

Acme-Morrison Silverstitcher saves 87 per cent in packaging materials cost for metals firm.

I claim your review copy of Roadrunner. ACME stands for *a company* (or corporation) *making everything*.

If you want proof of this just watch one of the first Roadrunner cartoons where it is displayed on the side of a crate!
Lee Cliff
Clowne,
Looks like you get the game!

Whittled out

Whilst looking through your mag (the July one), I came across this map of all the arcades in England and Scotland, well almost all of them, because you didn't include one of Britain's best arcades next to Brighton, Blackpool and Great Yarmouth.

The one I am talking about is Whitley Bay, why you missed it out I don't know but I'll tell you now it has just as many arcades as all the others.

Here is a list of some of the games we have: *De Luxe Out Run, De Luxe Le Mans, Hang On, Super Hang On*, both *Gauntlets, Bubble Bobble, Combat School, Rolling Thunder, Kick 'n' Run, World Cup, Roadblasters, Rastan Sage, 1943* and *Gryor, Double Dragon* and *Soloman's Key*. The two arcades I recommend is *Duncan's* and *Fun City*.
Daniel Broddle
Whitley Bay
There you go, folks. Next time you're Whitley Bay way . . .

Mad Max

Some reviews of games in brill CU are sometimes sad, because how could that stupid zombie called Mark Patterson give excellent *Mad Max* an overall rating of 4!!!

This arcade conversion from Ocean is the best game I've played in a long time, because this one is fun! I've had my C64 for four years now so I ain't a newcomer from a pocket calculator like Spectrum or something like that. And I don't need glasses either!!

The music is superb, of course, it's by the master of music Martin G. The gameplay is wonderful and as fun as reading a new issue of CU!! The graphics aren't the best on earth but still all right. The FX are better than any other game!! Just how could he call this super game "a downgrade of *Raid Over Moscow*", a game just can't be better!!
Erik Nyslin
Jönköping
Sweden
You must be easily pleased if all you want out of a conversion is something the quality of *Mad Max*. It is very average.

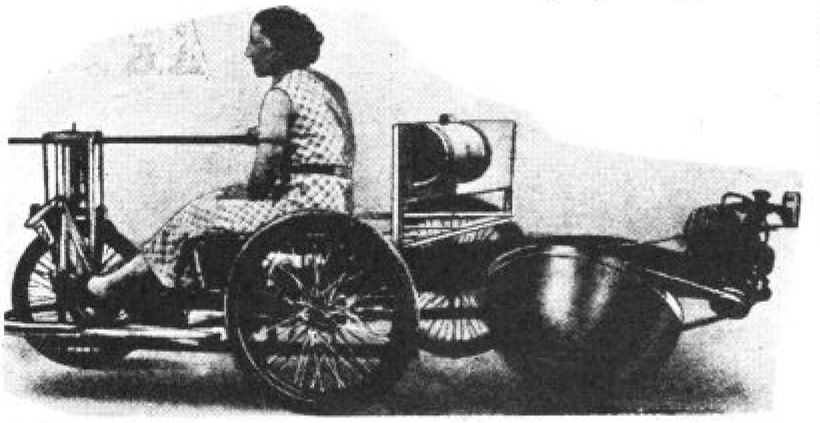
Grumpy title

I read Bill Scolding's *Deceptor* review. I'm not really sure if you can call it a review. All the way through it he didn't stop complaining about loading the game, Americans liking everything to be big, and Transformer toys, not to mention the game itself. He didn't even really play the game.

The way that he was talking it sounded as if for the last four nights running his wife had said, "Not tonight, dear, I've got a headache." Also, I though that the overall mark was taking the p**s a bit! What really winds me up is that this bloke is being paid to turf out rubbish like this. Could you please give this letter a grumpy title.
Lawrence Rugg
London, E9
Americans do like things big. Especially their mistakes.

Sexy paper

I am from another galaxy whose soul purpose is to have sex with other forms of life. To fulfil my need I have the power to change into different shapes and sizes, and so far, I am the piece of paper that you are now holding, I am already making sexual contact with your fingertips, I know that you are enjoying yourself because of the smile on your face. After you have had enough, please pass me on so that other may fulfil this need and spread the love throughout the Universe.
Joseph Fletcher
Harrogate
Oo-er! Consider this group sex then!



Letters, Commodore User, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU.

Letters

Poole info

I have just read your July issue and very much enjoyed reading the section on arcades. I live on the south coast near Bournemouth and Poole and I was surprised that you had not visited the arcade on Poole Quay called Quay Amusements. Here they have many up-to-date machines including two Out Run machines, two Hang On and Enduro Racer machines and many others including Super Sprint, Nemesis, Rampage, Gauntlet and the game that Mike Pattenden has never seen anywhere else, Tokio. Maybe you had not time to visit this particular arcade or had you no idea it was there.

Kieron White
Wimbourne
Dorset

It was Nick Kelly who had never seen Tokio anywhere else. But thanks for telling us about Poole. We can't go everywhere!

Footie

Having read your August mag, I would like to say that I agree with S. Harris, that us public need another decent football game.

I however disagree with the statement about West Ham, because they will do the double this year.

A West Ham Fan
(one of millions).

More on the way — see us next month.

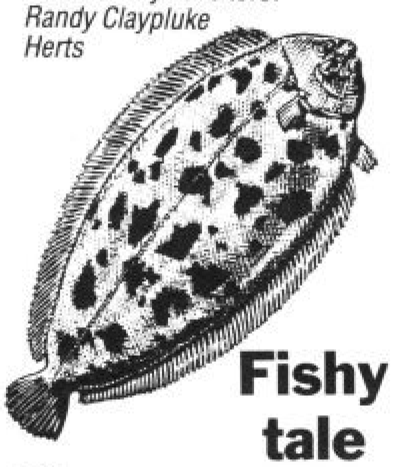
Claypluke protests

I must complain about the scurrilous slagging I received in Hotshots last month. I do not think it is fair of you to pick on me. Just because I like compacting sprites doesn't mean I am completely boring. What harm does it do if I write a few scrolling routines to unwind after a hard day's programming.

Furthermore the suggestion that I am behind with my game is completely unfounded since I am about to start it as soon as I've finished this letter.

Meanwhile the matter is in the hands of my solicitors.

Randy Claypluke
Herts



Fishy tale

This letter is for all those fish heads that continue to buy rubbish games that have been previewed and warned about.

Stop for *minnow* and take notice of C.U. These rubbish games are not worth a *squid*. The music is so *crab* it will give you a *haddok* and will probably make you hard of *herring*. Don't be *shellfish*, don't be *crabby*. Save your *sole* and listen to C.U. because I've *halibut* as much as I can take of fish heads complaining or wasting their money.

G. C. Brooks
Norton Canes

Cod you please make sure this kind of letter never happens again.

Personality

Congratulations CU on getting personalities to play games in the mag; it's an excellent way of finding something about them and about arcade games.

It was a pity you wasted time on Mark Kelly (any relation?) because Marillion are crap, but the Zodiac Renegade piece was really funny. What a sicko game! What a sicko guy!

I look forward to the next famous person you interview. How about doing Bono or even Madonna? That would be ace!

Ben
Cobham
Surrey

Thanks. Nick Kelly is definitely no relation to Marillion's keyboard player. We'd love to interview Bono and the thought of getting Madonna to play *Out Run* just has the Ed drooling into his in tray.

Conversion

So Ocean reckon that we have to put up woth crappy five (plus) year old games if we want the latest coin-ops. OK I don't mind that as long as they take some trouble over them.

I take as my example their effort at *Mario Bros*, a dated game, but still a great one with loads of levels and brilliant touches. An addictive game is an addictive game — unless Ocean get hold of it. Their 64 conversion bore no resemblance to it at all. My mate's got a Nintendo (one of the first — rich $@*%!) and the version of *Mario Bros* is great. Now don't tell me that all the graphics and levels couldn't be done on a 64, cos it's primitive for an arcade game really.

Come on Ocean if you have to give us these games fine, but don't just chuck them out in any old state, that's just taking the mickey out of us the public.

Geoff Saunders
Hull
N Humberside

We couldn't agree with you more. We've no complaints about Ocean converting old games if they make a good job of them. Sadly *Mario Bros* isn't the only one — *Mag Max* was pretty naff too — there again *Slap Fight* was good. It seems you still pays yer money. . . .

Amiga coin-op drought

Dear CU — I have been most pleased with the recent increase of Amiga game reviews in CU as I was thinking of getting one at Christmas. What worries me though is the lack of good coin-op versions coming out for it. OK, there have been some brill original releases that I have read about like *Defender of the Crown*, *The Pawn*, and *Barbarian* — but where are the likes of *Gauntlet*, *Paper Boy*, *Road Runner* and all the other coin-op converts that 64 owners take for granted.

I have my heart set on getting the Amiga because I think it is a marvellous machine and I do believe that eventually Amiga games will wipe the floor with the ST and all the Japanese game machine dross that are getting hyped by the likes of Zzap and C&VG right now. So I am not going to change my mind about getting an Amiga — its just that it does get up my nose to see companies churning out conversions of brilliant coin-op games for piddling little machines like the Speccy when they could be working on near perfect conversions for the Amiga.

Anyway, enough moans. I just love CU and keep up the Amiga reviews.

George 'Slammer' Green
Slough
Bucks

More Amiga reviews than ever next month we hope, but we're itching to play some good coin-ops too!

Boring

Just who does Mike Pattenden think he is, Ken Livingstone or something? Why does everybody else in CU never write his name without putting some stupid comment in inverted commas between the "Mike" and the "Pattenden"?

My guess is that Mike "My name looks pretty silly with all these nonsensical words in the middle" Pattenden is in fact a frustrated politician, or perhaps, a frustrated footballer. Whatever the problem is, he obviously only gets pleasure from lecturing other people on his own looney beliefs. Come on, CU, most of us readers would far sooner have some C16 game reviews, wouldn't we?

How about some technical features, for instance a comparative article on different joysticks on the market? Now that would be a lot more interesting than all this boring politics.

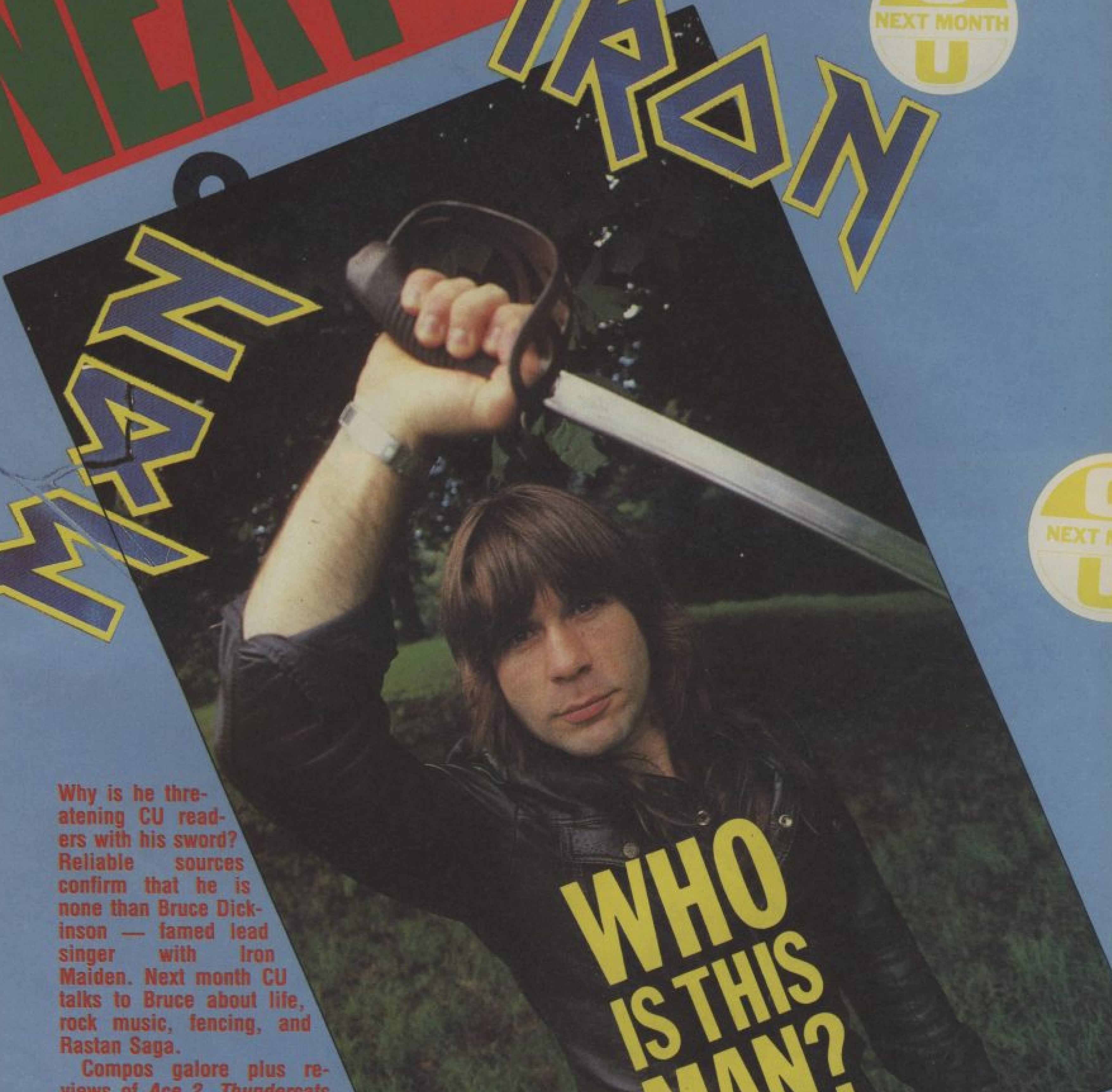
E. Witter
Poole.

Mike was unavailable for comment at the time of going to press — he was in a meeting with Reagan and Gorbachev.

Letters, Commodore User, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London ECIR 3AU.

NEXT MONTH

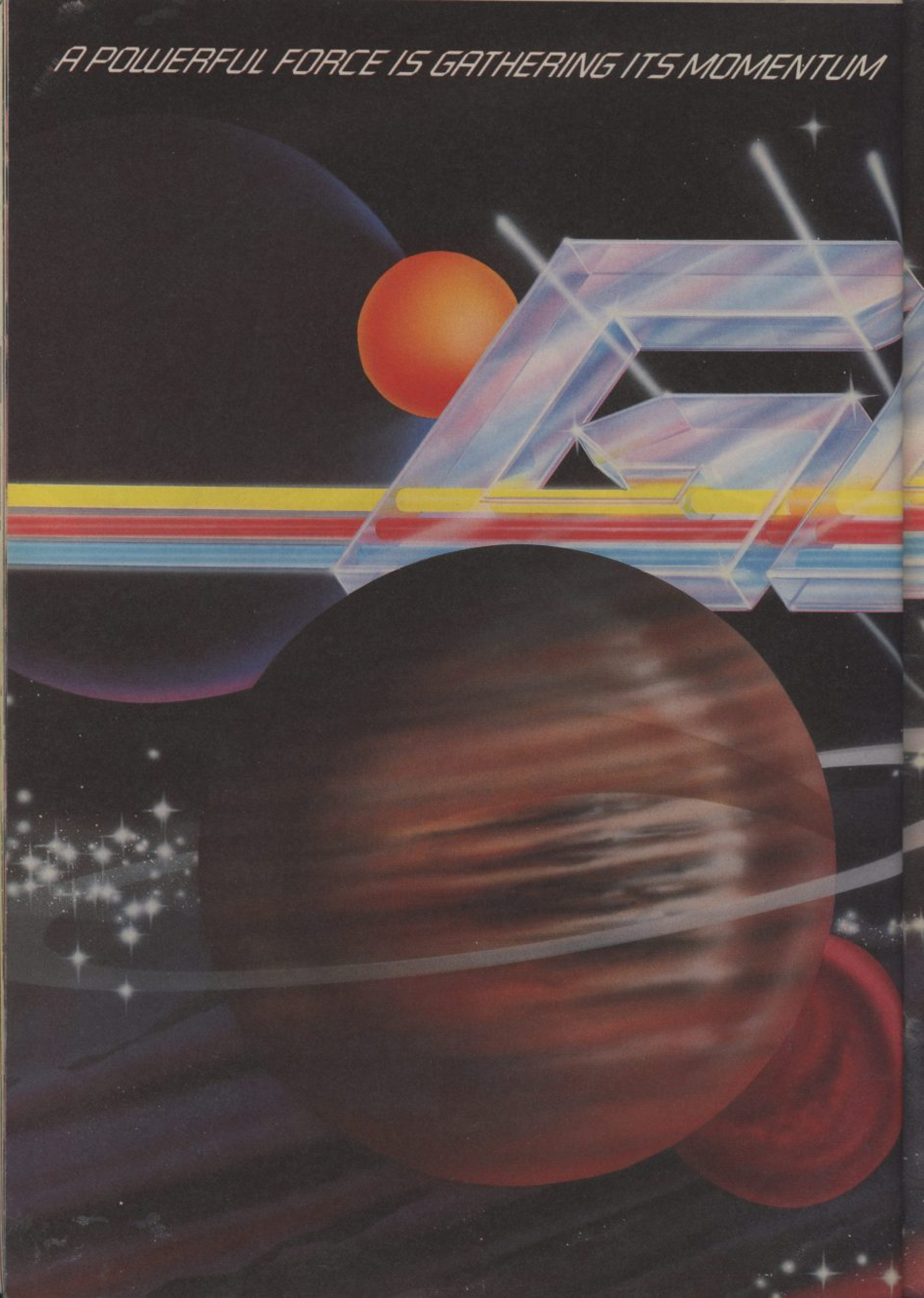
IRON MAN

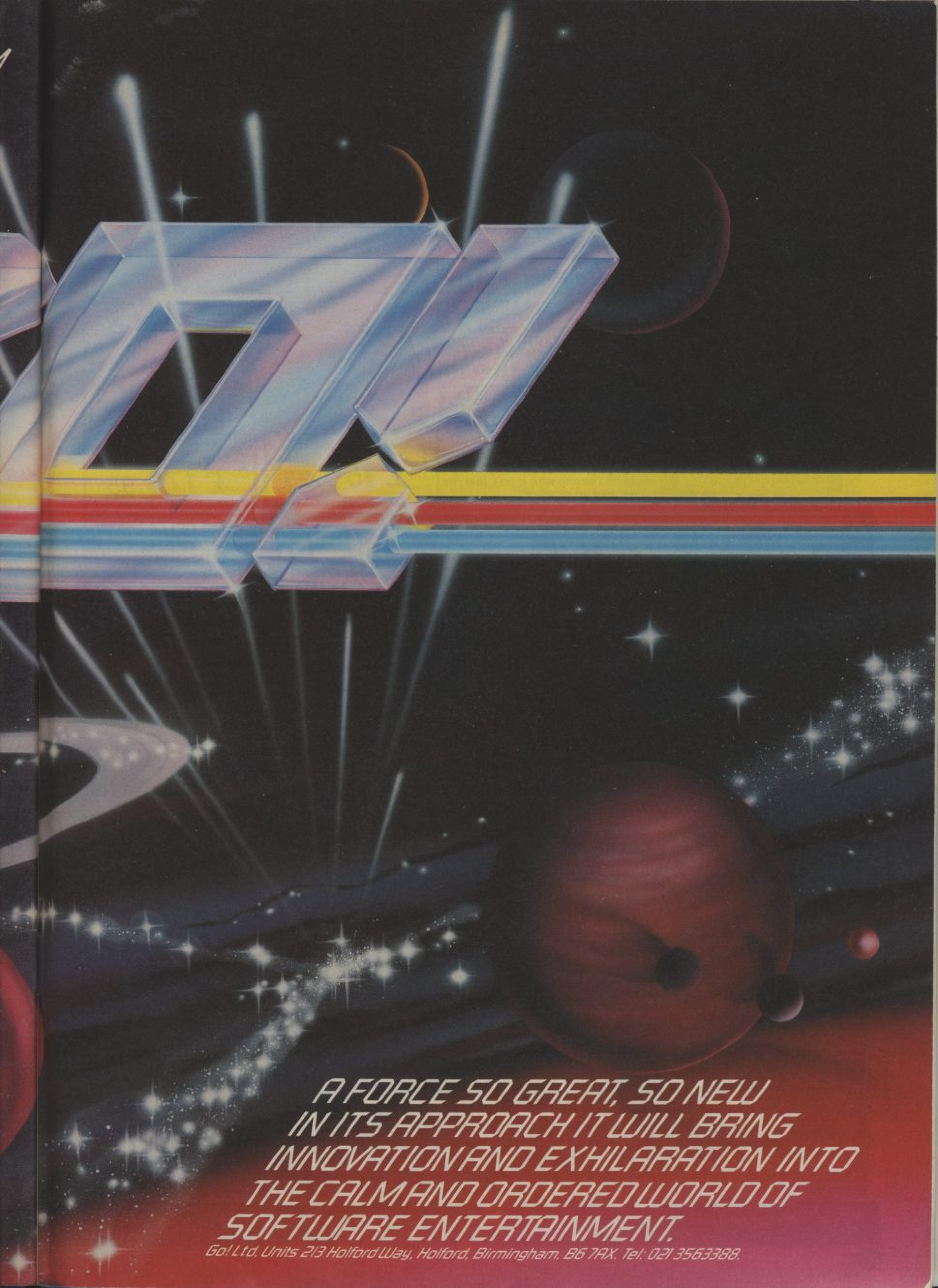


Why is he threatening CU readers with his sword? Reliable sources confirm that he is none than Bruce Dickinson — famed lead singer with Iron Maiden. Next month CU talks to Bruce about life, rock music, fencing, and Rastan Saga.

Compos galore plus reviews of *Ace 2*, *Thundercats*, and many more. STOP PRESS. Urgent message from the Ed — we will also be releasing details of our Autumn promotions — with four cover gifts from Nov to Feb. Don't miss next month's issue to find out what they are. And don't miss our stand at the PCW show. Meet the team, play our free coin ops and watch out for some special attractions. See you there!

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Monitor to suit A500....£ 279.00
(Price includes cable to suit)

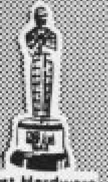
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INTO THE VALLEY

KNIGHT ORC



C.U. Screen Star

GrA
Rainbird/Level 9
Amiga Disk £19.95
Commodore 64
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Knight Orc is very different from anything you've seen before from Level 9. Their adventure system has been upgraded before, but this time it's been upgraded beyond recognition. So too have their graphics. Gone are the rather rudimentary and meaningless 'representations' replaced by 'digitised' pictures. Amiga owners get the best of the deal here, for there is more colour per picture on that machine than the others — including the Atari ST.

But it is the mode of play that has changed most dramatically. No longer do you have to make a map, and slavishly follow it move by move to return to a place you have visited earlier. No longer do you have to remember where you dropped an object that you may need later. All that is required is that you know which object you need, or which location you want to reach.

If that makes playing Knight Orc sound dead simple, then forget it! To offset the ease of operation, the adventure is endowed with more than its fair share of independent characters, with minds of their own, who get in your way, grabbing the very item you are looking for, and attack you with relentless determination.

The new commands that make this game so simpe to play, are GO TO, and FIND. Type "GO TO CASTLE", and wherever you are, you will be taken there, or as near as possible if there is something obstructing the route. If the drawbridge is up, for example, then you will be halted by it, and forced to solve the problem if you want to cross it.

As you are taken on your journey, each location will be described on the screen as you pass through it. But so also, will any events occuring there. Thus, if you are waylaid en-route, and fail to respond, the chances are you could lose all your possessions or even be attacked and killed, before getting there. Although the game is not played in real time, once you press RETURN after a GO TO, the independence of the other characters in the game, make it feel very much like real time.

But time can be frozen by reacting to events and hitting a key. If you do, you will be offered the option of stopping or continuing. After stopping, a quick 'OOPS' will take you back a move or three, and from there you can proceed with more caution.

Similar to the command GO TO, is RUN TO, and in this case, the messages you will get will be the events, without any of the location details to clog the screen.

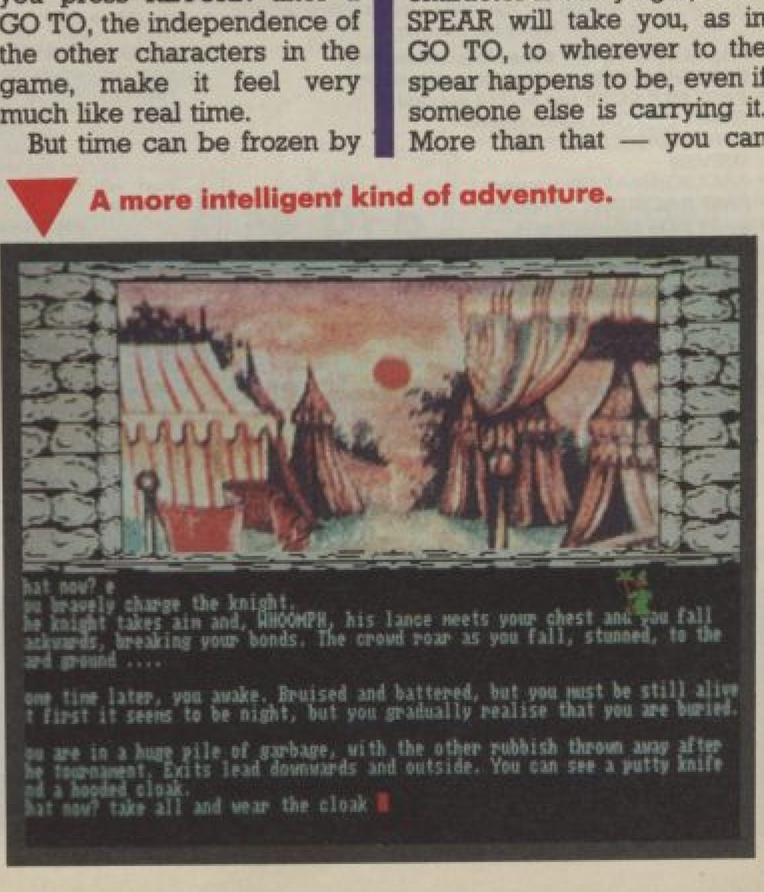
If you need an object, say a SPEAR, and you are not holding it, then even if you do not know where it is, or which character is carrying it, FIND SPEAR will take you, as in GO TO, to wherever to the spear happens to be, even if someone else is carrying it. More than that — you can

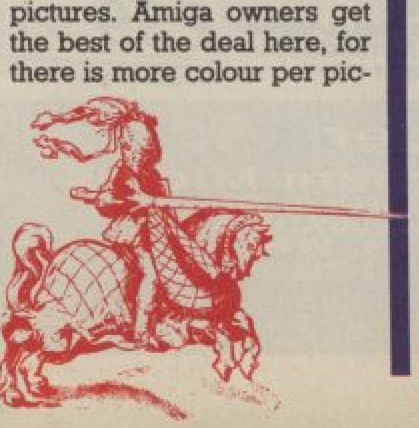
C.U. Screen Star

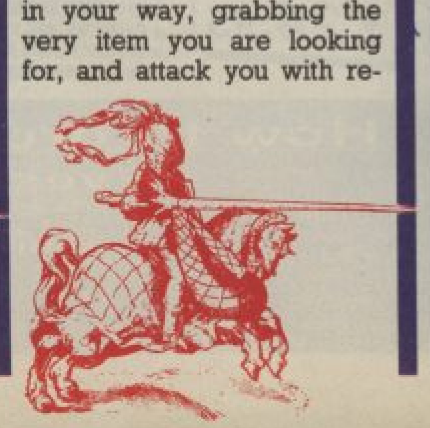


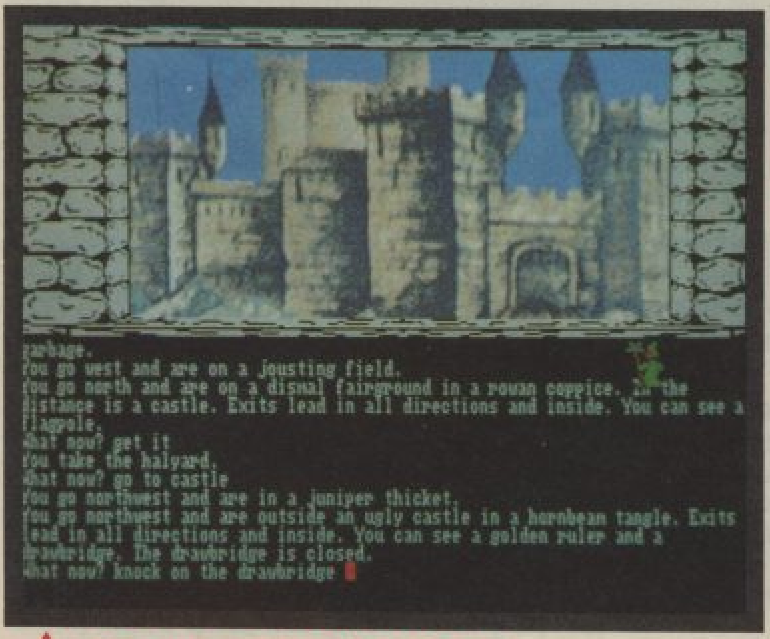
Oil painting — like graphics.

A more intelligent kind of adventure.









The stony edifice of Orc Castle.



C.U. Screen Star

by Keith Campbell

command characters to do things for you. DENZYL, FIND SPEAR, GET SPEAR, FIND ME, GIVE SPEAR TO ME, will save you all the time and trouble of doing it yourself, and so you can set off on some other task, content in the knowledge that Denzyl will eventually catch up with you and present you with the spear.

Of course, it doesn't always work out as easy as that. Ask Denzyl to fetch you some gold, and the chances are he will be set uopn by Odin, Boadicea, or one of the other baddies in the game. If he is not killed, he will eventually return, but will probably be empty handed when he does so.

That, broadly, is how it works, and to help you get used to this completely new way of playing an adventure, Part 1 of Knight Orc is designed to give you some practice. You are Grindleguts, a cowardly orc abandoned by his fellows and left tied to a horse, to fight in a joust on their behalf, whilst they make good their getaway. Reaching the bridge across the chasm that leads to Orc Tower, they see the Orc's Head Tavern Ladies Bowling Team after their blood, and not far behind at that. As soon as they are over the bridge, they demolish it, cutting off the dreaded female task force.

Your objective is to return to the Tower, and to do that, you must make a piece of rope long enough to span the chasm. Thus you are not collecting gold, but are on the lookout for anything long and flexible, like a hawser, a belt, or perhaps a simple piece of cord.

Some of the problems are relatively simple —others are not quite so straightforward.

You must keep all the other characters out of your hair whilst you get on with the rope job. They wander about all over the place — indeed, one wonders if they have a master plan going on in the background. They seem to have a great determination to recover any possession which you might have 'borrowed' from them.

Part 1 must be completed before you can enter either of the other parts. Instead of only being able to command one character, Denzyl, as in the first part, more of them are now at your disposal. Their characteristics are designed to complement your own, and it will be necessary to recruit a few to successfully complete the adventure.

Some of your old friends come through from the first part, but something quite strange happens both to them, and to your whole world, when you remove your newly acquired plastic visor . . .

As well as an advanced parser, Knight Orc sports an OOPS command which takes you back a number of moves if you make an error of judgement. There is also a RAMSAVE and RAMLOAD, very useful for play during a single session without having to resort to changing disks or finding a blank tape.

'The Sign Of The Orc' is the novella that takes up much of the instruction manual. It gets you in the right frame of mind to take the part of an Orc — greedy, cowardly, and disgusting.

As for the new fangled character interaction it is very cleverly implemented.

Level 9 are to be complimented on a system which effectively bridges the gap between disk and tape technology. They are looking to the future, without dropping their loyal tape fans.



A new departure for Level 9.



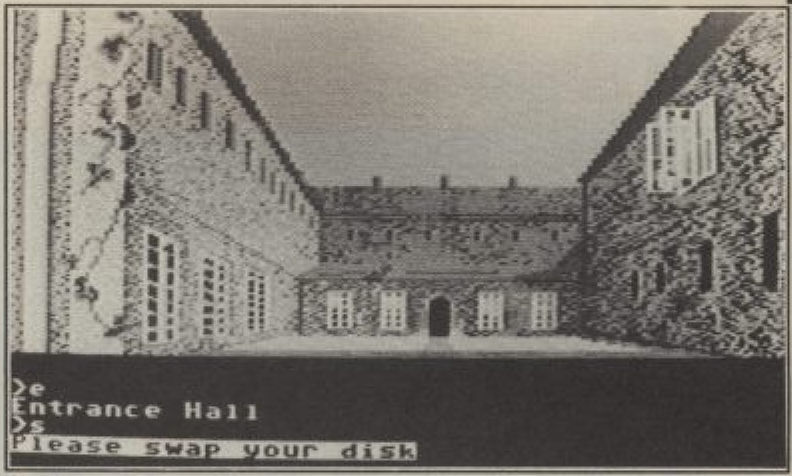
Knight Orc — the only game with 'Oops' appeal.

Ratings (out of 10):
Graphics — 8
Playability — 9
Puzzleability — 8
Overall — 9

INTO THE VALLEY

INTO THE VALLEY

INTO THE VALLEY



Graphics are nearly as good as the big machine — but oh what a chore.

GUILD OF THIEVES

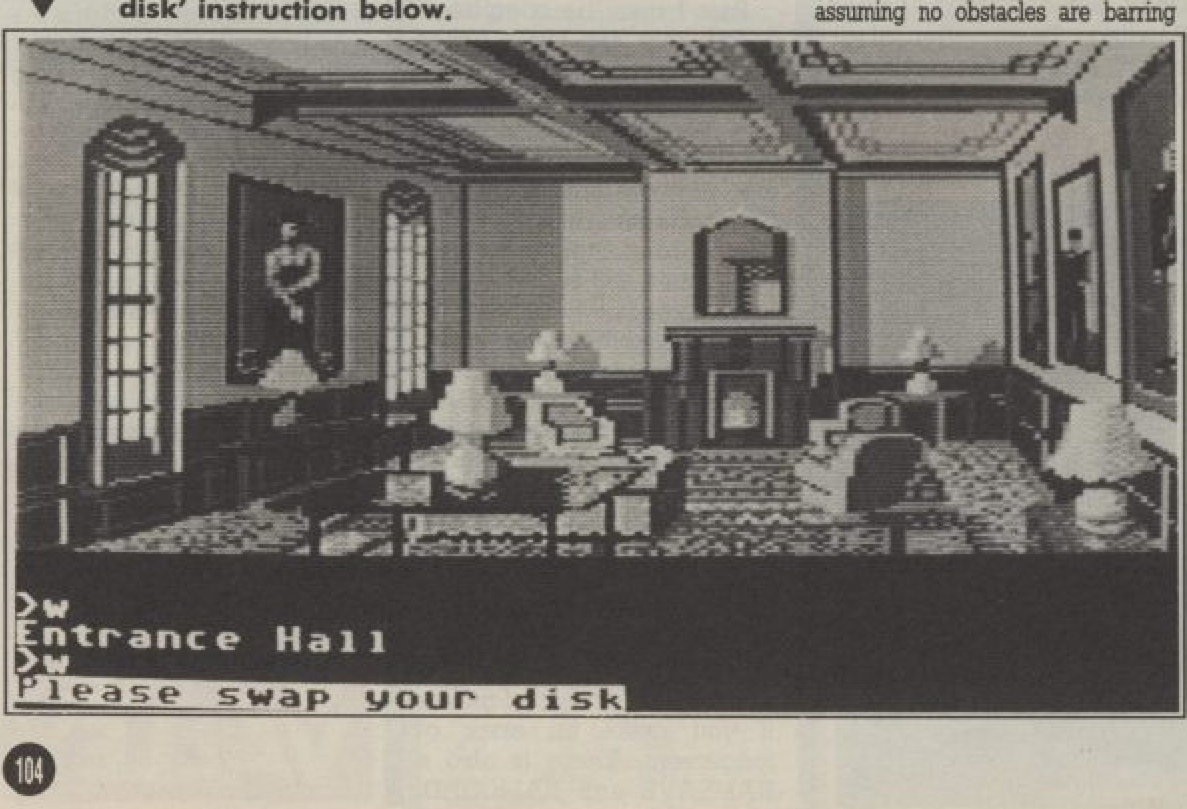
64/128
Rainbird
Price:
£19.95/disk

Rainbird's release of Magnetic Scrolls' Guild of Thieves for the Commodore 64, followed, as predicted, closely behind the Amiga version, making an essentially 16-bit adventure available for the world's most popular 8-bit machine. Reviewed in the Valley back in May, with comments on the 64 graphics, it is worth having a look at how the game actually performs in 64 format.

Superb 64 graphics.



Inside the Entrance Hall — a familiar 'swap disk' instruction below.



With the usual high quality Rainbird packaging, a copy of 'What Burglar' magazine, a Contract of Service certificate for the Kerovnia Guild of Removal Operatives, and a couple of other goodies are included along with the adventure itself, which comes on two disks.

The response time is, naturally, a lot longer than on the bigger machines. Typically, you'll have to wait about 20 seconds after pressing RETURN, before you can start typing again. When I was carrying three items, DROP ALL took 20 seconds, whilst GET ALL for the same three items, took 12 seconds with the graphics switched off, and 18 seconds with them on. Strange, I thought, for a non-graphical command — but no doubt the program was carrying out all sorts of subtle checks during that extra six seconds! This time delay makes playing an otherwise superb game a bit of a drudge for the impatient.

Moving into a 'graphic' location for the first time (there are 29 of them) with graphics on, often calls for the second disk to be inserted to read in the picture, before play continues back on the first disk. There is a GO TO (location) command, which, assuming no obstacles are barring your way, will take you to wherever you want. I did not report on this in May, since aslthough I knew it was to be implemented, it was not built into my pre-production version. When using this on the 64 with graphics ON, every new graphic location passed through calls foir its picture, and a number of disk swaps are likely to be involved — even for the occasional cameo. Thankfully, by pressing 'N' at the prompt, instead of any other key, causes the picture to be bypassed, and the disk-swap avoided.

Cameos are implemented as in the 64 Pawn. Small mini-representations of the full picture slide in at the top right hand corner of the screen, on second and subsequent entries to a graphics location, when graphics are set to VERBOSE. These tend to be marginally less effective than those on Pawn, lacking in colour, and looking rather 'blobbish'.

But the full graphics are superb, and better than any other adventure graphics I have ever seen on the 64! Two were printed in the original review without mention — did you notice them? Bet you didn't!

But the parser does show some signs of weakness, and this is much more noticeable on the 64 than the Amiga, because of the time penalty if things go wrong. On opening the cupboard, and looking in it, a jam jar and some rat poison is revealed. GET ALL produces THERE DOESN'T SEEM TO BE ANYTHING THERE. OK — so they are inside something, but that doesn't mean they can't be seen. Two GETs are therefore required, instead of one.

At £19.95, the 64 version of this large disk adventure, is a whole £5.04 cheaper than a certain other brand of epic adventures — and it has pictures too! Still — I can't award it a Screen Star — and that certain other brand (*could he mean Infocom? — Ed*) did get a CU Super Star award for their *Planetfall* game — even if it was a bit dearer. If you own an Amiga buy Guild, no question. If not, check it yourself first. The disk swapping business is bit of a pain.

GRAPHICS:	9
PLAYABILITY:	7
PUZZLEABILITY:	7
OVERALL:	8

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INTO THE VALLEY

RIGEL'S REVENGE

GrA Mastertronic/ Smart Egg 64/128 Price: £1.99

You are Harper, landing from a scout ship in a war-torn town, during the Rigellian war. Your dead colleague Elliot is at your feet. Only moments before, he was urging you to go in search of the Doomsday device — a Rigellian weapon which they planned to use to destroy the planet if they lost the war. But before he could tell you how to go about this task, he took his last breath.

The game loads under an animated title screen — and you must keep an eye on it! The events leading up to the beginning of the game are described in text windows during the load — and it is absolutely essential reading if you are to solve the difficult-yet-obvious problem at the very start of the game.

Once that's out of the way, then you're free — or al least as free as you can be faced with booby traps, and with tanks and vicious dogs roaming the street. But perhaps you'll find a way of avoiding them . . .?

The graphics are more informative and less regular in appearance than the usual variety of one per location, and combine nicely with Smart Egg's own adventure system to make a really polished adventure.

The text is impeccably written, with a past tense narrative following each command. This may sound rather strange, but it works very well in practice. Smart Egg's parser recognises three words, (it accepts more but throws what it doesn't want away) and the vocabulary, coupled with the alternative combinations provided, makes play very flexible. Solving the problems is without the frustration of searching for the correct words — but you still have to find the solutions!

A number of the problems require a certain amount of lateral thinking, whilst a useful tip for some of the others, is to keep persevering if you seem to be making a bit of headway. A good pull or push on something may help shift it, but sometimes a second application of effort is required!

There are a number of screen effects which add a final polish, taking the whole package way out of the ordinary run of budget adventures, and into the upper levels of 'standard' priced games. Dissolving text, instant windows for footnotes and help messages, and occasional clearing of the screen by scrolling all text off it, makes the display method as superior as the guts of the adventure itself.

Complete with tape plus ramload, although not Quilled of Gacked, Riegel's Revenge is a two parter — so you can see there's a lot to it! It is the best budget title I have yet seen — and better than many a 'full-price' adventure, too. At £1.99 you can't go wrong.

GRAPHICS:	8
PLAYABILITY:	9
PUZZLEABILITY:	8
OVERALL:	9

CAMPBELL'S comment

The trouble with tape is that it must be read or written to in sequence. Once a particular record has passed through the head, the whole tape must be re-wound to retrieve it again. The implication for adventure games on tape, is that the program, plus all the data, must be held simultaneously in memory. On disk, this is not the case, for sections of data can be accessed again and again, at very high speeds.

Thus a disk adventure has much more potential than one on tape. A sort of way round this, is by dividing a game into parts. But once one part of the plot and its locations have been covered, there is no easy way of going back. This constraint limits the structure of the plot itself.

The Commodore 64 was the first really popular machine offering an easily affordable drive. At £200 to plug in it brought really big adventures to many UK home computer owners for the first time. But it is notoriously slow.

Now, with the coming of 16-bit machines, with disk drive as standard, and cassette not supported, I am convinced that adventures are set to take off. To play an Infocom adventure on Amiga is a completely different experience to playing it on a 64. Everything is held in memory, and responses are virtually as quick as it takes to write all the text to the screen. Saving the game position impinges no more than a mere blip in the game play — no more hanging avout while the drive grinds away!

With the recent run of high quality disk adventures of real depth, I feel like a gourmet who has been over-eating for the last three months! Hollywood Hijinx, Guild Of Thieves, Bureaucracy, Stationfall, The Lurking Horror, and now Knight Orc, all coming within a space of six months, have provided a real feast. And there is more to come, with yet another three Infocom titles lined up for the autumn, not to mention Magnetic Scroll's next — Green Magic.

Being spoiled like this makes the reviewer far more critical of cassette adventures. Well written, they can be just as thrilling as disk adventures, and some are. But with the new lower-priced Amiga the 16-bit machines seem destined to replace the old 64's and Spectra, in terms of numbers owned, before long. Then disk adventures will be the order of the day — and cassette producers will, more than ever, have to provided better quality games. With Magnetic Scrolls, Level 9, and Infocom, all geared up to produce an ever-increasing catalogue of titles, to suit all tastes, 'standard priced' adventures that are thin, sloppy, or unoriginal, will not survive.

NEWS

PRIME MINISTER GETS THE TREATMENT!

October should see the country's favourite Prime Minister on computer screens in the form of Jim Hacker. Mosaic Publishing plan to launch a computer game based on the BBC comedy hit, Yes Prime Minister. Programmed by Oxford Digital Enterprises, and created from entirely new situations, the game will loosely follow an adventure format, containing also elements of strategy, and some scrolling graphics.

The launch promises to be an interesting affair, with scriptwriters and real MPs in attendance. Sounds a likely event for a few inimitable comments from Hot Shots Mike Pattenden. Also, the game sounds likely to be an extremely close simulation to the real thing — after all, a computer doesn't have a soul, either!

VALLEY Rescue

Ragnar Tornquist, our troubled Viking from the fjords, is in trouble again! Firstly, he's in trouble from me — he's playing Leather Goddesses in LEWD mode, despite the fact that he's only 17. That is STRICTLY ILLEGAL! Secondly — he's stuck in the game, in his own home, back on earth. Serves him right, I say!

From Norway to Spain, where Xavier Dealbert is facing a riddle in Barcelona. He cannot find an answer in Bard's Tale, which asks: Name the one of cold, foretold, twofold. "Can you," he asks?

David Gannon of Newcastle-upon-Tyne does not normally play adventure. In fact he only owns one game. "Your review of Necris Dome was wrong!" he writes. Well, if you think that's a good game, David, there's a wealth of adventures out there that will really have you hooked! But now comes the crunch — believe it or not, David is stuck! "How do you kill the mandroids, and how do you stop getting sucked in by the anti-plasma machine?" he asks. I'm stumped! I got too bored playing the game to bother to find out!

R. Skillen wrote from Worksop, seeking ways past the glowing ward in Kentilla. "I have tried all logical ways of getting past ... " he says. Look in the clues section, anyone who has been foolish enough to approach this problem in a logical way!

Two specialists are required now — a werewolf expert and a catacomb explorer! Who knows anything about Curse Of The Werewolf? Ola Hansson of Lund, in Sweden, is cursing his misfortune in being unable to find or make silver in Curse Of The Werewolf. He is convinced he needs silver to bring about the demise of the wolf. How can he come by this, and what use is the unconscious girl in the dungeon, he asks.

Meanwhile, Nigel Richardson is wandering around in the catacombs of Frankenstein, feeling decidedly hypothermic! He would warmly appreciate any help.

G. Collins of Barnstaple is at HQ at Darten. He knows how to get out of the maze, in the Tracer Sanction but he can't find anything inside it!

Ian Coveney of Chiswick, has collected two treasures, and rescued a princess. But he can't decide what is left to do from this point on, in Wizard of Akyrz. Who can help?

We started in Norway, and there we will finish, this month! Oyvind Ballingmo — your help is needed by Geir Nielsen! How do you pass the guard in Ring Of Power? If you can answer that, then you have permission to read Geir's answer to your Ring Of Power problem in the clues section!

FRANKENSTEIN:
Find ravine in forest maze, and climb the dead pine to avoid the bear. Jump when he is eight feet away.

BUREAUCRACY:
Weirdo and intercoms require punctilious punctuation!

STATIONFALL:
If you can't get it out — nip it out!

THE LURKING HORROR:
Cut the cord and make it slippy!

KNIGHT ORC:
Open the drawbridge without touching it!

RING OF POWER:
Rum to pass the pirate; drop the ball to pass the giant.

HULK:
Press the button once, then become Hulk, to escape the dome!

CATACOMBS:
To pass the harpy in the statue room, block ears with fluff, and ask Due to attack it with the sword.

KENTILLA:
Activate staff by saying SAGAGOO, then hit the ward with it.

RIGEL'S REVENGE:
Read the intro carefully for the very first problem!

THE PAWN:
It's the wristband the Guru is laughing at! Strip to cover it!

SEE YOU SOON . . .?

This is the Commodore adventurers' forum where we really do help you if you are stuck! Unlike some other magazines, we make no excuses about being too busy to reply — if you write, you WILL hear from one of us — if it is humanly possible!

If we can't help, we will say so, and then we'll throw it the problem at all the other adventurers who read Valley Rescue. Hopefully, we will be able to print the clue you want a couple of months later, when we've heard from someone who knows the answer.

You may have to wait a little while for your reply, for if we are just coming up to a deadline, then everything has to be dropped to make sure you get your next issue of CU! And one other thing — we can't hope to answer you if you don't tell us your address! Like John Alport of Liverpool, who wrote asking for help with Hulk, but didn't tell us where he lives. Look in the clues section for your answer, John!

If you can't wait for the post, here's a chance to come along and put your questions to us in person! The Valley Rescue and C+VG Adventure Helpline team will be on hand throughout the PCW Show at Olympia, towards the end of September. Wednesday 23 and Thursday 24 are for trade and press visitors only, whilst the show is open to the general public from Friday 25 to Sunday 27.

Throughout the proceedings, on the stand showing your favourite magazines — Commodore User, Computer + Video Games, and Sinclair User — you will be able to meet the people who answer your letters: Daniel Gilbert, Adrian Bott, Matthew Woodley, and yours truly. (When he's not propping up the bar — Ed.) Guest appearances will be made by Paul Coppins, whose duties as an Adventure Tester with Rainbird, will involve him for much of his time on the Rainbird stand.

If you haven't a problem to put to us, then come along anyway and introduce yourself. Have a chat about your favourite adventure games, and those you hate! You'll find us on the ground floor, in the National Hall.

NEWS NEWS NEWS

YET ANOTHER THREE!

It looks like a record year for Infocom releases. Three more titles are scheduled for release by Activision before the end of 1987, bringing the total to seven — more than one every two months.

Beyond Zork will be a departure from the usual Infocom style, combining elements of role-playing with a background of traditional adventure. Written by Brian Moriarty, author of Wishbringer and Trinity, Beyond Zork will feature Infocom's new interface system, with windows to display weapons carried etc. To start with, in his quest for the Coconut of Qunedor, the player will be called upon to create his character, in terms of strength, endurance, and other attributes. But 64 owners should not get too excited about this game — our information is that it will only be available for the Amiga.

Prudent Hearts is the title of an adventure in a more orthodox format, from new storyteller Amy Briggs. With a feminine bias, this will be a drama of suspense and passion set on the high seas in the 17th century — Infocom style!

Nord And Bert Couldn't Make Head or Tail of It sounds like an accidental remark made during the naming ceremony of the third of these new releases. However, that is its title, and it will consist of eight short stories, involving trickery with words. Author is Jeff O'Neil, who wrote Ballyhoo.

Releases are scheduled in six to eight weeks time.

TOTAL BACK-UP POWER CBM 64/128

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CAPTAIN'S LOG...THE TOTAL SOLUTION TO ALL YOUR BACK-UP NEEDS... THE ULTIMATE BACK-UP CARTRIDGE HERE NOW !!

REPORT ON FINDINGS

Action Replay Mk III is more powerful, more friendly and will back up more programs than any competing utility by taking a 'Snapshot' of the program in memory so it doesn't matter how it was loaded... from disk or tape, at normal or turbo speeds... the results are the same – **Perfect!! Amazing!!!**

STARBASE UPDATE

- Simple to use: just press the button and make a complete backup: Tape to Tape, Tape to Disk, Disk to Disk, Disk to Tape. – THE PROCESS IS AUTOMATIC – JUST GIVE THE BACKUP A NAME.
- All backups will reload at turbo speed independently of the cartridge.
- Dual speed tape turbo system. Programs can load up to 3 times faster than commercial turbos – that's over 10 times normal Commodore speed.
- Freeze the action then view the program with the monitor feature. Add pokes for infinite lives etc. Then restart the game or backup – ideal for customised versions of your games.
- Picture Save. Save any multi-colour. Hires screen to disk or tape. Compatible with Blazing Paddles, Koala, Slideshow etc.
- Fully compatible with 1541, 1541C, 1570, 1571, and ehancer or any CBM compatible data recorder.
- For C64, 64C, 128, 128D (in 64 mode).
- Unique Sprite Monitor. Freeze the Action and view all the Sprites, watch the animations scroll across the screen. Save Sprites to disk or tape. Customise your games by loading sprites from one game to another – then restart the program or make a backup.
- Compatible with fast DOS and Turbo ROM systems.
- Backup process in turbo speed – faster than any rivals.
- Special compacting techniques. Each program is saved as a single file.
- Transfers multistage tape programs to disk – more than any other cartridge – even the extra stages are turbo load – a unique feature.
- Sprite Killer! make yourself indestructible by disabling Sprite collisions in games.
- Fast disk format (20 secs).
- Built-in unstoppable reset button.



PLUS Built In FASTLOADER

Action Replay III even has a built in disk fast loader which speeds up loading 5 times. Uses no memory – invisible to the system. You could pay £20 alone for this feature.

WARP 25
BREAKS THROUGH THE 10 SECOND BARRIER!

Action Replay III now comes with an amazing new Disk Bootloader that will reload your backups at TWENTY FIVE TIMES normal speed. The fastest disk turbo yet devised!! There are NO CATCHES. WARP*25 works with ALL your games. Works with any disk drive. No preload required – No hardware modifications necessary – No user knowledge required – programs load INDEPENDENTLY. LOADING TIME – 9.8 SECONDS (for a typical game saved by WARP*25 in conjunction with ACTION REPLAY III). This time is for the COMPLETE load process from start to finish. Reload is entirely INDEPENDENT of the cartridge or any other hardware.

Compare these (accurate!) figures for some rival backup systems:

SYSTEM	LOAD TIME	PROGRAMS PER DISK	CARTRIDGE REQUIRED?
ACTION REPLAY MK III SAVED WITH NORMAL TURBO	25 SECS	THREE	NO
ACTION REPLAY MK III SAVED WITH WARP • 25	9.8 SECS	THREE	NO
FREEZE FRAME (MK IV)	40 SECS	TWO OR THREE	NO
FREEZE FRAME (LAZER)	25 SECS	TWO	YES
EXPERT SYSTEM	30 SECS	THREE	NO

All purchasers of Action Replay III will receive WARP*25 FREE with their cartridge. Existing Action Replay III owners can obtain WARP*25 Disk turbo by sending £2.50. post free. (No need to send your cartridge). OR obtain it FREE on the Enhancement Disk (£7.95).

THE ACTION REPLAY ENHANCEMENT DISK

The best collection of tape to disk transfer routines for nonstandard multiload programs (eg Dragons Lair I and II, Championship Wrestling, Summer Games, Ace of Aces, Gauntlet, Supercycle, Marble Madness, World Games). 31 titles in all. Uses our unique parameter system. No user knowledge required. Turboload throughout. NOTE: Standard cartridge transfers normal multiloaders eg Winter Games etc. etc. Disk includes file copy and disk backup utilities.
PRICE £7.95 with FREE! Multicolour Slideshow for display of loading screens, hires pictures etc. saved by Action Replay. Great entertainment!

PERFORMANCE GUARANTEE

100% Success? Rival Claims? Who's Kidding Who?
Action Replay Mk III will backup any program which any other cartridge can backup – and more! It also has an unmatchable range of features. Consider 'Freeze-Frame' for example, which uses more disk space, saves at slower speed, has slower tape loader, has no built in disk fastloader, no picture, Sprite or restart features and costs £10 more than Action Replay. So who's kidding who? Buy Action Replay Mk III. If you find that it does not live up to our claims return it within 7 days of receipt and your money will be refunded.

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❑ Now you can select from any of 8 32K EPROMs instantly.

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❑ Directory of utilities on power up.

❑ Fully menu driven on power up.

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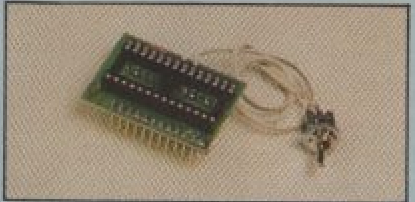
❑ Unique EPROM generator feature will take your own programs – basic or m/c and turn them into autostart EPROMs. (EPROM burner required).

❑ Accepts 2764/27128/27256 EPROMs.

❑ On board unstoppable reset.

ONLY £29.99





4 WAY KERNAL BOARD

❑ This board fits in place of the kernal in your 64 and accepts a 16K or 32K replacement kernal giving 2 or 4 different operating systems.

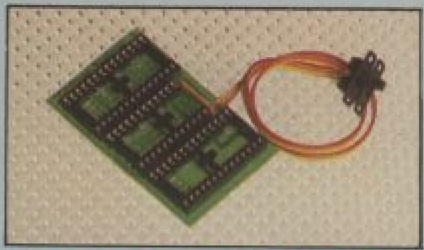
❑ Just flick the switch supplied to select between systems.

❑ This is a carrier only – ready to accept your own chip.

❑ Now you can have all your different systems available at one time.

❑ Full instructions. ❑ Fitted in minutes.

ONLY £8.99



5 WAY KERNAL EXPANDER

❑ A multi carrier board accepts up to 3 chips.

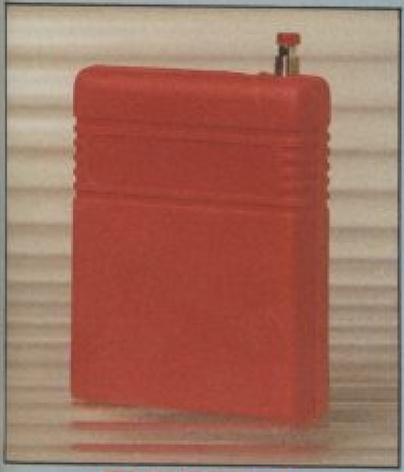
❑ Fits in place of original kernal of 64.

❑ Three sockets – one for the original kernal plus two others each accepting a 16K chip – that's 5 operating systems available at the flick of a switch!

❑ Fitted in minutes.

❑ Full instructions.

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❑ Unstoppable reset button.

❑ Resets even so called "unstoppable" programs.

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❑ Fits in cartridge port.

❑ Simply plug in.

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❑ Top quality fast action.

❑ Top & trigger fire buttons.

❑ Rapid fire/auto action.

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❑ Extra hardwearing.

ONLY £12.99 for 64/128

ONLY £13.99 for C16

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❑ Rapid fire control.

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DEEP SCAN BURST NIBBLER™

❑ The most powerful disk nibbler available anywhere, at any price!

❑ Burst Nibbler is actually a two part system – a software package **and** a parallel cable to connect the 1541/1570/1571 to 64/128 (state type).

❑ What gives Burst Nibbler its power? Conventional nibblers have to decode the data from the disk before it can transfer it using the serial bus – when non standard data is encountered they are beat. Burst Nibbler transfers data as raw GCR code via the parallel cable without the need to decode it so you get a perfect copy of the original.

● Will nibble upto 41 tracks. ● Copy a whole disk in under 2 minutes. ● Full instructions.
● Regular updates – we always ship the latest. ● Fitted in minutes – no soldering usually required.
● Full or ½ tracks. ● No need to buy parallel cable if you have Disk Demon/Dolphin etc.
● Cable has throughbus extension for other add ons.

❑ Whether to choose FastHack'em or Burst Nibbler? Fast Hack'Em is unbeatable value as an "all-rounder" – with nibblers, 1 or 2 drive copy, format, file copy, 1571 copy etc. etc., so if you have a more general requirement perhaps FastHack'Em is for you. Burst Nibbler is a pure nibbler second to none, for the reasons stated. So if it's just making backups you are interested in, there is no other product to beat it.

ONLY £24.99 COMPLETE

SOFTWARE ONLY £12.99 CABLE ONLY £14.99





EPROMMER 64™

❑ A top quality, easy-to-use EPROM programmer for the 64/128.

❑ Fully menu driven software/hardware package makes programming/reading/verifying/copying EPROMs simplicity itself.

❑ Will program 2716, 2732, 2764, 27128 and 27256 chips. 12.5, 21 or 25 volts.

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❑ Full feature system – all functions covered including device check/verify.

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❑ Comes complete with instructions – plus the cartridge handbook.

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❑ Accepts 2 x 8K EPROMs.

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❑ Full instructions.

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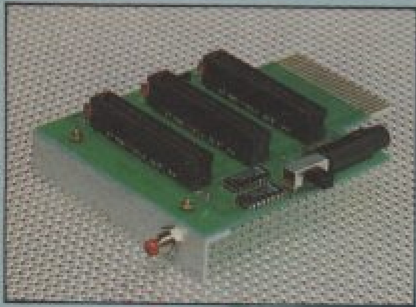
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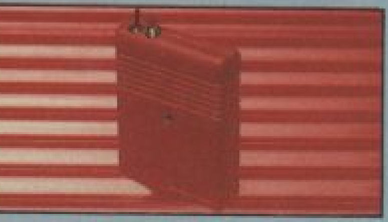
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Now you can have an 8K or 32K cartridge that you program like RAM then acts like ROM!

- ❑ 8K or 32K pseudo ROM.
- ❑ Battery backed to last up to 5 years (lithium battery).
- ❑ Simply load the program you require – then flick the switch. The cartridge can then be removed just like a ROM cartridge.
- ❑ Make your own cartridges including autostart types – without an EPROM burner.
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- ❑ 32K version has 4 x 8K pages.
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8K VERSION £14.99
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A series of utility programs for use with Smartcart. Simply load in the program and you have a powerful cartridge. When you have a different requirement – load in another program and you have a new cartridge. The process takes seconds, and can be repeated any number of times.

We intend to release a range of programs. The first available are:

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❑ all the features of Diskmate II (see ad).

Loaded in seconds – with full instructions. **ONLY £9.99**



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Now you can turn your MPS 801 into 4 printers in one!!

- ❑ Alternative character set ROM – fitted in seconds.
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"For anyone who uses their printer often this chip is a must. It's quick and easy to use and the end results are impressive" – Your Commodore, Jan 87.

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Turbo Rom II is a replacement for the actual kernal inside your 64. It provides superfast load/save routines.

- ❑ Loads most programs at 5-6 times normal speed.
- ❑ Saves at 5-6 times normal.
- ❑ Improved DOS support including 10 sec format.
- ❑ Programmed function keys:- load, directory, old, etc.
- ❑ Return to normal kernal at flick of a switch.
- ❑ FCOPY – 250 block file copier.
- ❑ FLOAD – special I/O loader.
- ❑ Plus lots more.
- ❑ Fitted in minutes – no soldering usually required. (On some 64's the old ROM may have to be desoldered).

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A complete lightpen/graphics illustrator package.

- ❑ A fully icon/menu driven graphics package of a calibre which should cost much more.
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  ● Range of brushes ● Airbrush ● Rectangle ● Circle ● Rubberbanding ● Lines ● Freehand ● Zoom mode ● Printer dump ● Load/save ● Advanced colour mixing – over 200 hues!! ● Cut and paste allows shapes/windows/pictures to be saved to/from tape/disk.
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- ❑ Pictures can be saved from Action Replay and edited with Blazing Paddles.

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- ❑ A disk toolkit is an absolute must for the serious disk hacker. Toolkit IV has more features than most for less.
- ❑ DISK DOCTOR V2 – Read and write any track and sector including extra and renumbered tracks. Repair damaged sectors. Look underneath read errors.
- ❑ HEADER/GAP EDITOR – Decodes and displays ALL header information including off bytes and header gap. Rewrite the entire header and header gap. Renumber sectors. Also edit any sector tail gap.
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- ❑ FILE COMPACTOR – Can compact machine programs by up to 50%. Saves disk space. Compacted programs run as normal.
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RAM DISK

- ❑ Turn your Smart Cart into a 32K RAM/disk.
- ❑ 32K of instant storage area for files/programs.
- ❑ Load/save instantly.
- ❑ Disk type commands: load, save, directory, scratch.
- ❑ Program data retained when computer is switched off!
- ❑ Full command set with instructions.

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Model & Robot Control made easy

- ❑ Robotek 64 is a comprehensive hardware/software package which enables you to connect your 64/128 to the outside world.
- ❑ 4 output channels – each with onboard relay
- ❑ 4 input channels – each fully buffered TTL level sensing.
- ❑ Analogue input with full 8 bit conversion.
- ❑ Voice input for voice control.
- ❑ Software features:- test mode/analogue measurement/voice activate/digital readout etc.
- ❑ Excellent value! **ONLY £39.99**

including hardware/software/mic etc. (State tape or disk)



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- ❑ The new sampler allows you to record any sound digitally into memory and then replay it with astounding effects.
- ❑ Playback forwards/backwards with echo/reverb/ring modulation etc.
- ❑ Now with full sound editing module to produce outstanding effects.
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- ❑ Up to 8 samples in memory at one time.
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- ❑ Com-Drum software is available separately at **£9.99** to turn your Sampler II into a Com-Drum system as well as a sampling system.



COM-DRUM

Digital Drum System

- ❑ Now you can turn your computer into a digital drum system. ❑ Hardware/software package.
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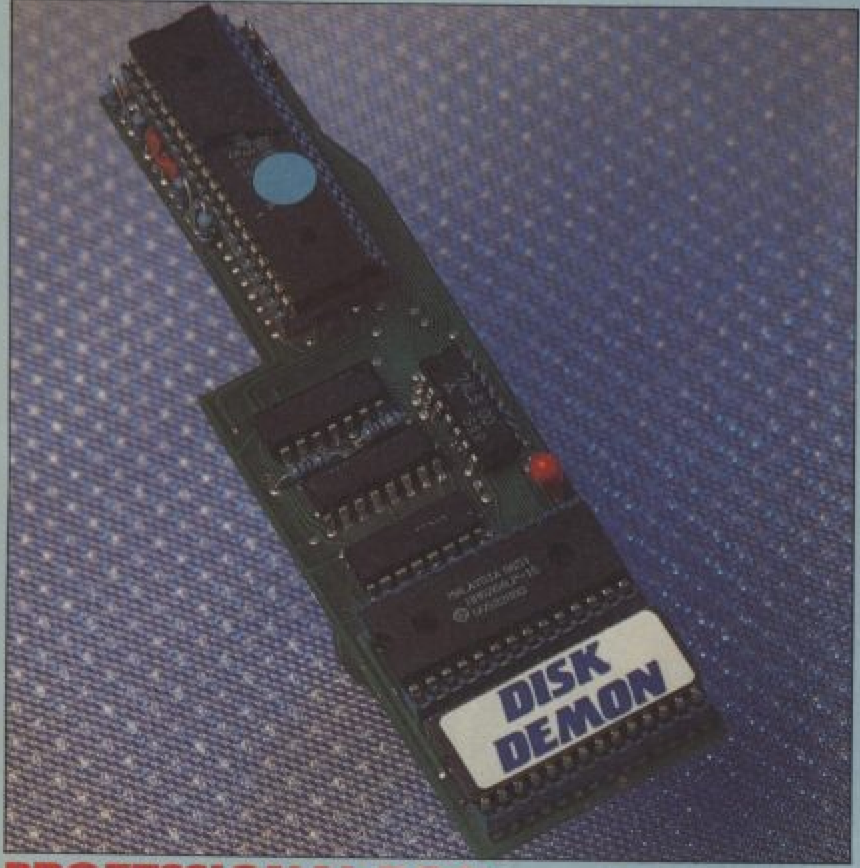
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"The world's fastest parallel operating system"

- ❑ Loads a typical 202 block program file in under 3 seconds!
- ❑ 60x faster load (PRG files).
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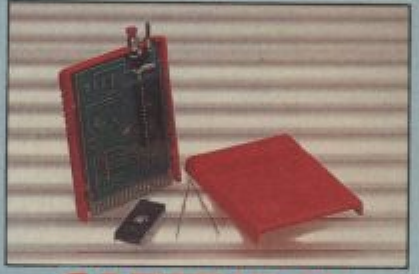
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TOMMY'S TIPS



▲ **A cathode-anode-interface, transmogrifier with optional sun-roof? A fancy new disk drive? or an antique milking machine? Only Tommy knows. . . .**

Key Question

I own a Commodore 64 and have some queries that I would like your help with. Could you tell me if there is a way in basic to make the keys repeat, like the cursor keys and space bar do?
M. Stephens

To make all the keys repeat type POKE 650,128. To make just the space bar and cursor keys repeat, type POKE 650,0. If you want to stop any keys repeating then POKE 650,64 will do the trick.

Disk Doubts

I'm writing about a minor problem relating to my 1541C drive. I purchased it a week ago and have found it very easy to use and operate. But, after formatting, creating and saving a program after another program on disk how can I remove the previous program without re-formatting and losing the following program. (Eg, how do you erase a single program or file without having to re-copy the others.) This is done by the 'scratch' command on the C128 but how can I do it in 64 mode? I hope you can understand and solve my problem as you are the only person who I can ask, not to mention, I have a growing number of disks full of unwanted files and programs.
P. Mason,
Birmingham

To get rid of an unwanted file in 64 mode you still use the 'scratch' command, but you have to do it by means of the command channel. The syntax of using the command channel is as follows:
OPEN 15,8,15,"command".
By using this method you can send all sorts of commands to the disk drive, such as Initialise, Scratch, Validate, etc. Thus, to delete a file from the disk you type OPEN 15,8,15,"SO:filename". The S tells the drive you want to scratch a file, the O says it is drive O and 'filename' is the name of the file you want to remove. If you are deleting a lot of files, then it is advisable to do a 'Validate' after you have finished, to re-organise the remaining files into a more efficient grouping. If you don't do this then you may find that the 'blocks used' plus 'blocks free' no longer equals the total number of blocks you started with. This is because the disk space will become fragmented after a number of deletions. To Validate, type OPEN,15,8,15,"VO". If you are going to do a number of disk commands one after the other then it is more efficient to OPEN the command channel with OPEN 15,8,15, and then give the commands by using PRINT#15,"command".

80 Column Print

I am writing to ask a question about the printer I have for my Commodore 64. It is an Epson MX-80F/T III and has the comprint interface. The problem is that when it is switched on, and I send a listing to the printer, it prints only 60 characters per line. I tried changing the mode to the transparent mode, but when I listed the program, it printed 80 characters per line OK, but the paper did not move up for each new line. Is there a simple poke to correct this error, or is there something wrong with my printer? Your help is appreciated.
Gavin Hamilton,
Bearsden,
Glasgow

The problem lies not with the computer, but with the interface and the printer. You have to remember that the interface will make changes to the information sent to the printer depending on how the interface is set up when it is first powered up. Secondly, the printer has a number of small switches (DIP switches) which do the same thing for the printer on power up. The problem with no line feed (LF) is that the printer is currently set to expect a line feed from the computer. When you list a program, the computer only sends a carriage return (CR), so the listing all occurs on one line. There are two ways round the problem: one is to set the printer to give a LF after receiving a CR (using the DIP switches — see manual). The other way is to add a secondary address to the OPEN command for the printer which will cause the interface to do the same thing. The latter method is better since you can make the change without having to take the case off the printer. To find out the value of the secondary address, see the COMPRINT manual. The COMPRINT is a very versatile interface and as a result can be a little confusing to set up. The 60 column printing may well be the result of using 'command mode 1', which uses a defined layout. I suggest you read the manual very thoroughly in order to get the best from this interface.

Compass Query

When I make a program I need to ask the players, "North, South or East" etc . . . so could you tell me how to do it please?
Paul Airey,
Thornaby
Cleveland

The actual method really depends on how sophisticated you want your program to be. However, keeping things simple, all you need to do in this case is to recognise the first letter of the word being input; that way the player can type 'NORTH', 'NOR' or 'N' and still go North. Without knowing how you organise the rest of your program it is difficult to be precise as to what to do after you have recognised the word, but my personal advice would be to have a 'sub-routine' for each location or room in the program and use an ON X GOTO construction. This means that you can enter a room from any valid direction, yet keep the code for what happens in each room entirely

separate. The example program below gives a basic outline, allowing access to a number of locations so that you can travel around the 'map' by typing the required direction. Happy Adventuring!

```
   1 FOR P=1 TO 4:READ LOC$(P):
     NEXT
   2 GOTO1600
   3 DATA "N","S","E","W"
  10 PRINT
  15 INPUT"NORTH, SOUTH, EAST
     OR WEST";A$
  20 ANS=0: FOR P=1 TO 4
  25 IF LEFT$(A$,1)=LOC$(P) THEN
     ANS=P
  30 NEXT P:PRINT
  35 IF ANS=0 THEN
     PRINT"DUMMY!!!": GOTO 10
  40 RETURN
  50 PRINT"YOU CAN'T GO THAT
     WAY, STUPID!"
  60 RETURN
1000 PRINT"YOU ARE IN A CELLAR.
     THE ONLY"
1010 PRINT"WAY OUT IS NORTH"
1020 GOSUB 10
1030 ON ANS GOTO
     1600,1040,1040,1040
1040 GOSUB 50: GOTO 1020
1200 PRINT"YOU ARE IN A SHED.
     YOU CAN GO"
1210 PRINT"NORTH OR EAST"
1220 GOSUB 10
1230 ON ANS GOTO
     1400,1240,1000,1240
1240 GOSUB 50: GOTO 1220
1400 PRINT"YOU ARE ON A ROAD.
     YOU CAN GO"
1410 PRINT"SOUTH OR EAST.
1420 GOSUB 10
1430 ON ANS GOTO
     1440,1200,1600,1440
1440 GOSUB 50; GOTO 1420
1600 PRINT"YOU ARE IN A HOUSE.
     YOU CAN GO "
1610 PRINT"SOUTH, EAST OR WEST."
1620 GOSUB 10
1630 ON ANS GOTO
     1640,1000,1800,1400
1640 GOSUB 50: GOTO 1620
1800 PRINT"YOU ARE IN A GARDEN.
     YOU CAN ONLY"
1810 PRINT"GO EAST OR WEST."
1820 GOSUB 10
1830 ON ANS GOTO
     1840,1840,1400,1600
1840 GOSUB 50: GOTO 1820
READY
```

Frustrated of Sussex Writes

● I own a Commodore 128 and I am frustrated because I can't use the 80 column screen. Please could you tell me if there is a hardware add on so I can use 80 column on the 1701 monitor?
Darren Goulder,
Crawley,
West Sussex

As far as I know there are at least three companies who do adaptors to allow the 1701 monitor (or other composite video 40-column monitors) to be used with the 80-column RGBI output from the 128. However, most of these give monochrome only, although this is perfectly adequate for things like word-processing etc. Trilogic are the only company I know doing a colour adaptor, but it costs a rather hefty £50. They also do an even more expensive model which includes a TV adaptor, and a monochrome version which costs £30. They can be contacted on 0274 684289. Companies doing only a mono adaptor are: Robtek, who charge £15 and are on 01-847 4457 and Sabre, who charge £10 and can be contacted on 0332 556361.

User Defined Garbage

● On Tommy's Tips, a few months ago, you helped most of us out with UDG's. (Notice the way I said most!) What I want to know is, how do you make larger graphics move without that 'flicker' which is made by SCNCLR. For example, how do you make a circle come towards you, without that slow movement (a program would be most helpful). Or does this need that awkward, but good M-code. Only one problem with your four program on Tommy's Tips that month is that I printed it all in, and what I got was pathetic! Pathetic!

After all that programming (phew!) what I got was letters moving across the screen. Is it me (I typed it all out twice), or is it you? One last point; you've shown us how to define the letter 'A'; how do you know it was 'A'? How do I change it? These three queries are the only questions that rule my life. Please get me out of this dilemma (Shakespeare write-a-like).
Paul Hardwick,
Plymouth,
Devon

I am afraid there is no way in BASIC to move large 'objects' around the screen without flicker, since the time taken to draw the new object and then delete the old object is much longer than the eyes' persistence of vision. In these cases m/code is the only answer. Also, in the case of a circle coming 'towards' you I assume you mean that it gets bigger, which involves recalculating the size each time through the loop. As for the examples in the Tommy Special; firstly they were designed to give you an idea of the techniques, rather than actually be the basis for a games program. Secondly, you should have seen a jet fighter moving across the screen, not letters. In order to see the proper demo, you must have typed in examples 1,3,4 and 5 as a single program. You either haven't changed the char set from ROM to RAM (example 1), or you haven't included example 3 which redefines the char set. The character set is stored in memory in a certain order, the first 8 bytes defining the '@' character, the next 8 bytes defining 'A' and so on. To change any given letter, look up its 'POKE' value in the relevant section at the rear of the manual and then multiply this by 8. Add the number you get to the start of the character definition RAM address and this will give you the address of the first byte of that character. You can then amend the 8 bytes to be whatever you want, using the techniques described in the article. Examine examples 1 and 2 carefully; they give you all the information you need to do it yourself for any given character.

Missing Sprites

● I have just bought a C64 and I have a problem with the locations for sprites. When you poke a number, example 1. (192 into 2040) the sprite data for sprite No. 1 will be read into location 12288. 2. (198 into 2040) the sprite data will be read into location 12672 what number would you poke into 2040 to read sprite data into location 4096? I would be grateful if you could explain how to work this out. Thank you.
David Prince,
South Shields,
Tyne & Wear

The data to define one sprite requires 63 bytes of RAM, plus one byte for use as a system 'pointer', giving a total of 64 bytes per sprite. Sprite data HAS to be in the same 16 kbytes, the sprite data can reside (in theory anyway) anywhere between 0 and 16383. Since each sprite is 64 bytes long, there are 256 possible start points for any given sprite (64 × 256 = 16384). The value that goes into the sprite register therefore refers to which of the 256 start points is being used. By using the formula start-address/64 = pointer, we get 4096/64 = 64, so 64 is the number to POKE into 2040 if sprite 0 data is stored from 4096 to 4159 inclusive. Do note that 4096 is not that far above the normal start of BASIC, so unless you shift the start of BASIC, you won't get much code in before you hit the start of your sprite data. If you want to store sprite data in this area, you would be better raising the start of BASIC and storing your sprites from 2048 to the new start of BASIC. This way you still get a very large BASIC area without any danger of overwriting either your program or your sprite data. Although I said that sprite data can reside anywhere between 0 and 16383 in theory, in practice you must ensure you keep well clear of the first 2048 bytes as these are used by the system and the screen memory. The only exception to this is the cassette buffer, which can hold the date for 3 sprites starting at address 832.

Amiga Monitored

● I own a C128D with a 1701 monitor. Later this year I hope to upgrade to an Amiga A500, and I was wondering (a) will the Amiga run on the 1701? (b) if not, please could you tell me the price of a 1081. Your help is of great use.
Mark Sampson,
Kent

The good news is that the Amiga A500 will work with virtually any type of display. It has outputs for composite video, as used by many monitors including the 1701; RGB(I), as used by the 1901; and RGB(A) whih is the output used for the hi-res 1081 Amiga monitor. In addition, there will be an RF modulator available at about £25 which will allow the Amiga 500 to be used with a standard colour TV. All of which means that no matter what sort of display you use with your present Commodore machine, you can safely change to the A500 without having to fork out precious pennies for yet another monitor. Of course, you can't expect quite the same quality n a TV, or even a 1701, as you would get on the 1081, but with the latter costing anything between £350 and £400 I'm sure you can live with that!

TOMMY'S TIPS

Hot Shots

By Mike Pattenden



Amazing isn't it? You go on holiday, spend two weeks relaxing, stuffing your face and pouring drink down your throat and come back feeling in a pretty good mood (despite having your car broken into in Bilbao) only to find that you've been stabbed in the back. Office atmosphere has been tense, bitter acrimony is in the air because Nick Kelly, a man who knows more about pelotta than he does football goes to interview one of the country's top strikers, from one of the country's top teams two days before I return home. What should I do to repay such dirty double dealing? A Hotshots special prize to the person who suggests the best punishment. But what has been happening in my absence from the country?



◀ **Who should burst into the Family Leisure Centre arcade in London's Old Compton Street whilst CU hack Nick 'Material Boy' Kelly and myself grappled with Capcom's Street Fighter than 'that girl' hotly pursued by photographers as she escaped from her own birthday party in Groucho's club. Naturally we kept playing . . .**

● Well probably the major shock is news of a body blow to the software industry. **Bruce Everiss**, the man nobody quite remembers is back. The ex Imagine, ex, ex etc has returned to work with Code Masters No sooner was his office phone installed than he was dialling Hotshots private number to tell us how good the company is. "We're selling more games than just about anyone else at the moment apart from Mastertronic," he crowed down the phone. Why do you think budget houses are doing so well? I asked humbly "Because we're better than full price companies, we give better value and more often than not we write better games. The full price games market is dead," he ploughed, on, "Companies like Ocean and US Gold are taking the p★ss out of kids with much of their stuff." So there you have it. The software industry in a nutshell. Welcome back Bruce . . . .

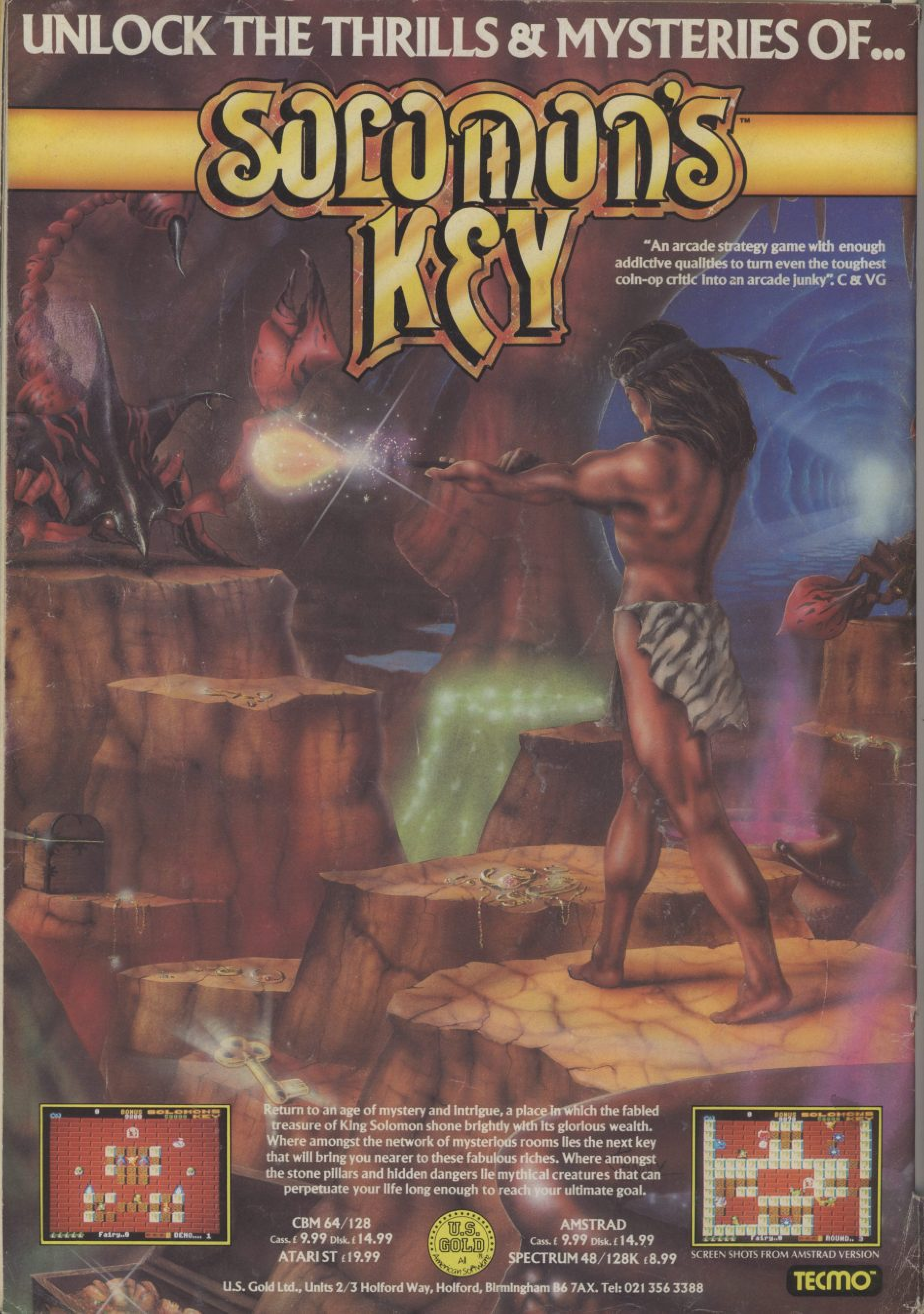
● Who should turn up at the Ed's London penthouse the worst for wear in my absence but Firebird chief **Herbie Wright** and Sales Manager **Sean 'Beefy' Brennan** in search of more drink. They rampaged through Euge's record collection but the only thing they could find worthy of play was a 12" copy of Mike Oldfield's Moonlight Shadow. No that's a lie, they put on the Jam and pogoed all over the sofa instead. Would they do that on their own designer furniture . . .?

● Meanwhile the writs are flying. Testy simultion company **Microprose** are screaming because Cascade have released *Pirates on the Barbary Coast* just as their own *Pirates* sim hits the streets. Just what they expect to happen because someone uses the same word in their title I don't know.

● Nice to see Zzap crowing because Julian Rignall came top in the **Mega Apocolypse** game testing, what they failed to mention was that he had his arse kicked completely when he met CU's Daniel Gilbert for the Mastertronic arcade challenge. See you at the PCW show finals guys . . .

● What's going to be the Christmas Number One? No prizes for guessing the favourite by a mile is **Out Run**. However conflicting reports are circulating as to the quality of the 64 version. One set of rumours suggests that work is going badly and US Gold are prepared to ship out a version in any old state as long as it's ready in time. Another has a group of hackers coming into the company's Brum offices with a fab version and getting signed on the spot to do the job. Let's hope the latter version is true . . .


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